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PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

A WEST AFRICAN AGENDA

EDITED BY

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PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

A WEST AFRICAN AGENDA

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FOREWORD

This publication represents a milestone in the formulation of a viable development communication program within the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). More than two years ago, it was realized that a critical link was missing in the information chain that formed the basis of the Centre's information sciences and systems program. There is demonstrable evidence that for over twenty years the Centre has invested in an effective program in the processing, manipulation, and dissemination of information in support of the development process. What was equally evident was the absence of a dedicated program related to the "communication" processes. There was an absence of research initiatives that examined how information was being received, acted upon, assessed by the various target groups, and perhaps most importantly, how this assessment was communicated back to those who were responsible for the original messages. Without this critical link in the information chain, I believed that there could be no real success in furthering the development process.

Thus two years ago, a subprogram within the information sciences and systems program was created. This development communication program took the name of "**CIME**" to reflect the interrelations between **Communication** at the grassroots level, the exchange of **Information**, two-way **Media**, and nonformal **Education**.

This publication presents the conceptual framework which led to the articulation of the CIME program, and explains in detail how it was formulated, with references to the conclusions of a regional meeting of Central and West African nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) held in Burkina Faso, in November 1994.

It also contains the conclusions of another meeting in Canada, in February 1995, organized to discuss various aspects of the program with Canadian experts in development communication and representatives of African NGOs taking part in the program in West Africa.

Another interesting dimension of this publication is that there is something for everyone interested in development communication. There are valuable inputs on the use of participatory communication for nonformal education, and on the specific needs of women and young girls and the role they can play as communicators within their community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the select group of experts who have contributed to the discussions on the program, and I hope that the collaboration established will continue in the future. I am confident that this group will ensure that the program will continue to seek lofty goals, while setting realistic expectations and achievable performance targets.

I am proud to have played a role in the formulation of the CIME program. More importantly, I am happy to see how it has evolved from a theoretical concept to a carefully articulated program that is being held up to the rigour of peer review and assessment. This major publication reflects that review process.

Martha B. Stone
Senior Advisor
Information Science

Introduction

- A Canadian-African Dialogue in Participatory
  Development Communication
  C.V. Rajasunderam

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A CANADIAN-AFRICAN DIALOGUE

IN PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

C.V. Rajasunderam

Changing Perceptions

Efforts to harness communication and information technologies for planned development purposes have been going on for at least four decades. The terminologies and methodologies used to describe this area of work are many and varied: development communication, development support communication, project support communication, information-education-communication (IEC), extension education, social communication, and so on.

Most of these early approaches to development communication were based on a transmission model of communication, where information was seen to pass from senders to receivers. As one development communication practitioner put it, "Development communication has largely remained a strategy of unidirectional marketing and monologue."

During the last ten years, there has been a gradual shift from this hierarchical, top-down view of communication to a deeper understanding of communication as a two-way process that is interactive and participatory.

This change in perception about the nature of the communication process, coupled with the dramatic spread of democracy in recent times, are working in favour of more participatory decision-making at the local level and of communication as a part of the process.

Simultaneously, some development communication practitioners have promoted the concept of community participation as an educational process in which communities, with the assistance of animators or facilitators, identify their problems and needs, and become agents of their own development.

The focus on participatory development concepts and community animation processes have provided strong impetus to the evolution of participatory approaches to development communication. There is now increasing recognition

among development practitioners and planners that participatory communication is the "most promising approach for decreasing dependency, building self-confidence and self-reliance of the people."

Despite the success of a number of participatory communication projects in developing countries, much remains to be done by way of research on complex issues related to operationalizing participatory communication concepts.

Conceptual Interfacing

There is also a need to explore further the conceptual links between participatory development communication, grassroots nonformal basic education, popular education, and adult learning.

The interrelated issues cannot, of course, be explored adequately in a vacuum or discussed purely in the abstract, given the operational reality that participatory development communication is a process that unfolds in each unique situation and cultural context.

Building Common Ground

This does not in any sense minimize the usefulness and importance of intellectual and experiential cross-fertilization among development communication practitioners from different countries and regions. It was the raison d'être for the two-day Consultative Meeting on Participatory Development Communication in the West and Central African Context held at Ryerson Polytechnic University on 10 and 11 February 1995 to advance the IDRC research program in development communication.

Forty-nine participants drawn from Canadian universities, development agencies, the UN system, private consulting institutions, and NGOs attended the meeting. The participants included five members of the African program committee. It was a mix of communication practitioners, researchers, university academics, development workers, and specialists in adult education.

The following main objectives were set for the meeting:

* to mobilize an interdisciplinary group of Canadian researchers and practitioners in support of the IDRC development communication program;
* to facilitate exchanges between African and Canadian communicators on topics and issues brought up by NGOs who took part in the participative segments of the IDRC research program in development communication; and
* to map out key issues related to the use of participatory development communication as a tool for nonformal education.

Output of the Meeting: Some Reflections

The core material presented in this publication emerged from presentations and group discussions at the meeting, and from follow-up to the meeting.

Overall, there was consensus among all the participants that the two-day meeting was "a rich intense dialogue" on complex issues related to participatory development communication. In this sense, the richness of our experience at the Toronto meeting cannot easily be recaptured in a publication of this nature, nor can it be condensed in a document.

What follows, then, is an attempt to synthesize and bring together some of the many ideas, thoughts, and feelings which grew out of our shared commitment to people-centred development and participatory communication.

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Participatory Development Communication

- Development Communication in West and Central Africa: Toward a Research and Intervention Agenda
  Guy Bessette

- Participatory Communication for Development
  Chin Saik Yoon

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Development Communication in West and Central Africa:

Toward a Research and Intervention Agenda

Guy Bessette

It is now increasingly recognized that people's active participation is an essential component of sustainable development. Any intervention with the intent of achieving a real and sustainable improvement in the living conditions of people is doomed to failure unless the intended beneficiaries are actively involved in the process. Unless people participate in all phases of an intervention, from problem identification to research and implementation of solutions, the likelihood that sustainable change will occur is slim.

Development communication is at the very heart of this challenge: it is the process by which people become leading actors in their own development. Communication enables people to go from being recipients of external development interventions to generators of their own development.

This paper situates the concept of development communication and presents the development of an IDRC initiative in West and Central Africa.

Development Communication

Development communication is a rather broad area in which one finds many approaches and various ideologies. Beyond the differences in ideologies and methodological approaches, however, we may underscore that the lessons from experience in this field have demonstrated the importance of emphasizing interactive and participatory processes, rather than the production and dissemination of information separate from the community processes.

Although the term is sometimes used to indicate the overall contribution of communication to the development of society (communications in the service of development), or sometimes to highlight the use of the media to deal with development themes (media products), it generally refers to the planned use of strategies and processes of communication aimed at achieving development.

It is at the level of this "aiming at achieving development" that the differences abound: extend participation to decision-making and strengthen community institutions (AID 1993, p. i); compensate for gaps in terms of attitude and information (Boafo 1985, p. 83); produce a consensus among the participants in a development initiative (Balit 1988, p. 13); promote social justice and democracy (Beltrán 1993, p. 9); etc.

According to the definition we choose, we will also find the influence of very different approaches or methodologies competing to achieve the same goal: community animation, adult education, IEC (information, education, communication), and social marketing are some of the main approaches we found in the field.

The concept of development communication arose within the framework of the contribution that communication and the media made to development in the countries of the Third World. In the 1950s and 1960s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and US AID (the American Aid Agency) sponsored numerous projects utilizing the media for communication, information, or educational purposes, with a view to facilitating development. Other major United Nations agencies, like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also got into the act, and subsequently promoted communication within the framework of development project implementation.

As for the expression "development communication," according to the Clearinghouse for Development Communication, it was apparently first used in the Philippines in the 1970s by Professor Nora Quebral (1985) to designate the processes for transmitting and communicating new knowledge related to rural environments. The fields of knowledge were then extended to all those likely to help improve the living conditions of the disadvantaged people.

What we have here, in fact, is more of an approach than a discipline. As far as its definitions are concerned, they usually consist of general statements. Thus, it is referred to as a combination of information and evaluation processes, as well as a combination of actions likely to solicit and motivate local participation in its own development (Seminar on Communication and Development 1983, p. 6), or

in any series of planned communication activities aimed at individual and social change (Middleton 1985, p. 31), or in the application of communication with a view to promoting socioeconomic development — that is, a type of planned social change (Rogers 1976, p. 73), etc.

There are also some definitions that give a more restrictive meaning to the way communication supports a development activity or a development project. We can then talk of development communication as a social process aimed at producing a common understanding or a consensus among the participants in a development initiative (Balit 1988, p. 13). The expression "development support communication" is in fact more correct, and designates, quite accurately, an effective methodology that has proved itself.

Finally, there are definitions that emphasize access by the population to the communication process with a view to promoting social justice and democracy (Beltrán 1993, p. 9). These various definitions — to mention only a few (see, in particular, Blake 1993, p. 8) — demonstrate the extent of this field of intervention.

Whatever the case may be, one will find, at the heart of this concept, the need for an exchange of information to contribute toward the resolution of a development problem and improve the quality of life of a specific target group, as well as to implement needs analysis and evaluation mechanisms within the communication process.

Trends in Development Communications

Our experience of the past forty years has demonstrated the crucial importance of communication in the field of development. Within this perspective of development communication, two trends developed successively: an approach that favoured large-scale actions and relied on the mass media, and an approach that promoted grassroots communication (also called community communication), promoting small-scale projects and relying especially on the light media (videos, posters, slide presentation, etc.).

These trends, which still coexist today to various degrees within the field of development communication, are linked to the evolution of the development and communication models that have marked development efforts up to now.

As a matter of fact, the first development models were defined exclusively by their economic variables. As the MacBride Commission report noted:

> The former models used communication especially for disseminating information, for getting people to understand the "benefits" promised by development and the "sacrifices" it demands. The imitation of a development model, based on the hypothesis that wealth, once acquired, will automatically filter down to all levels of society, included the propagation of communication practices from top to bottom...The effects were a long way from the effects that were expected
> (MacBride 1980, p. 6).

The trend toward mass communication initially marked the first two decades during which the media were utilized in the field of development. It espoused the idea that it was enough to disseminate the knowledge and the technologies of the North to ensure that they were adopted. Once adopted, they would achieve the development of the South. This first vision of development is referred to as the paradigm of "modernization."

These initial experiences, centred mainly around the mass media, relied both on a communication model based on persuasion and information transmission, and on a development model based on increasing economic activity and changes in values and attitudes.

The intervention paradigm of these two decades, which is found in two publications that had a decisive impact on the orientations adopted at that time — *The Passing of Traditional Society* by Daniel Lerner (1958) and *Mass Media and National Development* by Wilbur Schramm (1964) — consists of a very simple communication model that can be described in stimulus-response terms, based both on the logic of persuasion and on a development model linking the latter to increased productivity.

One of the models resulting from this paradigm that had a major influence on communication practices in the area of educational development is the innovation dissemination model. This model, resulting from an extension of agricultural practices exported to the developing countries, involves the transmission of information to farmers by a resource person and was formulated in theory by Everett Rogers in 1962. This theory rested on three main elements: the target population of the innovation, the innovation to be transmitted, and the sources and communication channels.

This model has been criticized by several people for its reductionism. It did not take into account the different types of target populations (e.g., prosperous farmers who own land and are open to new techniques versus other farmers who are illiterate, poor, and exploited). It also failed to take into account the impact of the economic and political structures on the capacity to adopt innovations. The same charge of blindness where social, political and economic factors are concerned also applies to innovations that require a process of diffusion. Finally, communication channels and sources were generally used within the framework of vertical, top-to-bottom communication. There was never any mention of horizontal communication between the groups in the communities affected by the problem that the innovation was meant to resolve, or of vertical, bottom-to-top communication, which would have made it possible to bring the people's problems to the attention of the decision-makers and the experts.

Since then, the development model as well as the communication models have evolved considerably. The vast amount of experience in the use of the media for educational or informative purposes in the development process has led to the development of new orientations and new practices. At the same time, several criticisms have been raised with regard to the first development models and to the functionalist vision of the development communication model.

A new model emphasizing the endogenous character of development has made it possible to define development as a global process, for which societies are responsible. In this new perspective, development is not something that can come from the outside. It is a participatory process of social change within a given society (Rogers 1976, p. 133). This model has also made it possible to extend the concept of development to nonmaterial notions by bringing into the equation notions of social equality, liberty, revenue distribution, grassroots participation in development, etc.

The conceptions everyone had of the role of communication in development have changed radically. In the first development model, the communication paradigm consisted of transmitting the technology necessary for the growth of productivity. In the second, it consists of stimulating the potential for change within a community. The concept of grassroots participation in the development process has become a key concept.

The first result of these changes in vision on day-to-day practice was the need to move from a relatively simple vision of a one-way transmission of technical information, to the promotion of bi- or multilateral systems based on grassroots participation.

At the same time as this change in communication and development models was taking place, two development paradigms were developing which helped to orient communication interventions.

On one hand, several people were questioning the modernization model because they saw that communication did not lead to development, and observed that in fact, the countries of the South appeared to be sliding further and further into poverty, low salaries, and poor living conditions. This criticism, which was developed above all in Latin America, emphasized the link between this situation and the situation of economic dependence on the industrialized North: the development of the countries in the North was conditional on the underdevelopment of the countries of the Third World, and the "centre" developed at the expense of the "periphery."

This situation is referred to as the paradigm of "dependence." According to this paradigm, obstacles to development come first and foremost from external, not internal, obstacles: that is to say, the international economic system. Consequently, the mass media cannot act as agents of change, since they transmit the western message, and the capitalist and conservative ideology. This paradigm, which is still in existence today, was also criticized because it put too much emphasis on the contradictions at the international level and not enough on the contradictions at the local and the national level. The resulting discussions and recommendations regarding the "new information order" related to this paradigm.

Its extension at the national level emphasized the relationship between communication and politicization. One of the models resulting from this paradigm, which exercised in the past, and today still exercises a determining influence on the development communication practices, is the consciousness model developed by Paolo Freire (1973). Freire, and several other communicators after him, identified communication as a process that is inseparable from the social and political processes necessary for development.

Freire insisted on the fact that the mere transfer of knowledge by an authority source to a passive receiver did nothing to help promote growth in the latter as a human being with an independent and critical conscience capable of influencing and changing society. According to him, for development communication to be effective, it had to be linked not only to the process of acquiring technical knowledge and skills, but also to the awareness-raising, politicization and organization processes.

In his model, which he explains in *The Education of the Oppressed* (Freire 1973), development communication can be considered as a tool that the grassroots can use to take control. This tool can be used for the following purposes: becoming aware of the various facets of the real development problems in their region; organizing in order to react collectively and effectively to these problems; bringing to light the conflicts that divide the various interest groups; becoming politicized — learning to provide alternatives to problem situations and finding solutions to various problems; and becoming "technicized" — obtaining the necessary tools to put to concrete use the solutions provided by the community.

This model and its applications have also been subject to criticism. It was stated, among other things, that politicization through the community media may constitute an adequate approach in countries that tolerate recourse to political action; but in most developing countries, this political action would lead to the overthrow of the governing, "have" élite without providing the means for changing conditions, and the confrontations that follow would commonly lead to repression and regression of democratic rights (on this point, see Berrigan 1981, p. 41).

Thus, rather than a direct politicization approach, many prefer an approach based on education, where the objective is not to cause a confrontation but to provide the tools necessary for organization.

A third paradigm orienting the formulation of development communication models and interventions is one that is generally called "the paradigm of another development." This paradigm emphasizes not only material development but also the development of values and cultures. Where development communication interventions are concerned, it emphasizes the small media operating in networks and the use of grassroots communication approaches. According to this paradigm, grassroots participation reinforces the chances that communities will adopt activities appropriate for them.

One of the models attached to this paradigm is the methodology of community media.

"Wherever carefully developed programs have failed," states a UNESCO study, "this approach, which consists in helping people to formulate their problems or to acquire an awareness of new options, instead of imposing on them a plan that was formulated elsewhere, makes it possible to intervene more effectively in the real space of the individual or the group (Berrigan 1981, p. 13)."

The concept of interactivity, with the light media as its operational instrument, makes possible the endogenous acquisition of knowledge and skills within the framework of a search for solutions and the communication process. This is referred to as a recourse to a methodology of community media, whose principal elements are:

- identification of needs by means of direct contacts with the groups;
- concretization: examination of the problem identified by the groups in the light of local conditions;
- selection of priority problems by the groups;
- formulation of a durable methodology for seeking solutions;
- identification of the amount of information required and access to this information;
- action: execution by the groups of the projects they have designed;
- expansion towards the outside to make known the points of view of the groups to other groups or to the authorities; and
- liaison with the communication system to make known their action (Berrigan 1981).

Other models combine different concepts. This is true, for example, of the practices for supporting communication in development projects, which combined the community approach and recourse to the small media with practices that can often be linked to a model for disseminating the innovations. This approach emphasizes the planning of communication activities as a support to a development project. Its aim is to produce a common understanding or a consensus among all the participants in a development initiative. It emphasizes the facilitation of exchanges of points of view among the various people involved in the development project and aims at taking into account the grassroots perceptions in the planning of the project and mobilizing them in the development activities set out in the project. The methodology results from educational technology and is characterized by the integration of needs analysis and evaluation mechanisms in the communication process.

Other practices are based on the community approach and the grassroots awareness-raising model. The same is true of the alternative for democratic development communication, which emphasizes grassroots access to the communication process for the purpose of promoting social justice and democracy. In certain cases, this is translated by an emphasis on participation by the most disadvantaged in the communication process (access to small media at the local level), and in other cases, by actions promoting cultural expression and the search for ways of taking control of the mass media.

Finally, we saw recently, notably in the case of the fight against AIDS and the promotion of condom use, approaches resulting from social marketing, having recourse at the same time to research techniques adapted to small groups, and to communities and the large-scale use of the mass media. We are also witnessing the renaissance of projects utilizing the mass media — for example, interactive school radio projects in Latin America and Africa, and the promotion of a television for development (project WETV and project SATURN GLOBAL). To these approaches we will also have to add all the practices related to basic education, informal education, distance learning, literacy, and post-literacy activities that have their own methodologies and community-level communication and media communication approaches.

In short, the field of development communication is vast and its divisions are numerous. The different paradigms that have marked its evolution are still active

to various degrees, and the models that are attached to them are as different as the ideologies and the orientations that inspired them.

In spite of the diversity of approaches and orientations, however, there is a consensus today on the need for grassroots participation in development and on the essential role that communication plays in promoting development. This is very well said in a popular FAO slogan: "There is no development without communication (Balit 1988)."

Where Are We Today?

Our development communication experience over the past 40 years has taught us a lot about the role of communication in development. The main lesson probably has been the recognition of the need to move from communication practices based on the one-and-only model of information transmission removed from the community processes, to practices involving the grassroots in their development.

Our experience shows us that the point of departure for development communication is not the dissemination of an innovation or of a new idea that is full of promise, but the grassroots expression of its needs. It follows that the communication models based exclusively on models of information transmission removed from community processes clearly are doomed to failure.

Participation, by putting the emphasis on the needs and the viewpoints of the individuals and groups, becomes the key concept of development communication. Recourse to a systemic methodology and the implementation of horizontal processes — in which the people are directly associated with the communication process and are thus more likely to formulate their problems themselves, become aware of new possibilities, and take their knowledge and their viewpoints into consideration in the communication process — constitute the major elements of its methodology. The implementation processes are essentially interactive and participatory at all levels, and coincide with the fundamental mission of IDRC — Empowerment through Knowledge: "Empowerment is often seen as something one can do to another person. This is not so. People are empowered by an environment that gives them the freedom to express themselves (Woods 1993, p. xiii)."

Where the orientations to be pursued are concerned, a major line is the communication support of the concept of "new development," as presented by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (*Development Dialogue* magazine) and several authors and researchers who emphasize decentralization, access to communication, and participation. Among the characteristics of the "new development," we find:

* action based on needs, including nonmaterial needs like social equality, democracy, etc.;
* endogenous and autonomous nature (change based on a community definition of community resources);
* protection of the environment (rational use of potential within the limitations of the local ecosystem);
* efforts to achieve structural transformation of social relations, economic activities and power structures; and
* exercise and promotion of participatory democracy at all levels of society (Servaes 1991, p. 66).

Several researchers also emphasize the reinforcement of institutional and individual skills, ways of approaching decision-makers, and grassroots communication. Thus, recently, Beltran proposed the following notes for "an agenda for the 20th century":

* combine the best of the development support communication activities with alternative means of communication (technical skills with political perception);
* aim increasingly to reinforce institutions rather than mount short-term operations;
* persuade the large communication schools to include development communication in their curricula;
* support research into communication aimed at democratic development;
* support the small communities, the NGOs, the small community and union organizations;
* place emphasis on communication aimed at health, hygiene, nutrition and the grassroots;
* insist that political planners and leaders use communication to reach development objectives;
* encourage basic communication training at all levels; and
* reinforce institutional regional communication (Beltrán 1993, p. 30).

The fact remains that to be durable, development must take into account human factors and make it possible for the communities in question to decide for themselves what objectives they want to aim for and what means they want to use. Development communication is the tool that makes this process possible. As a corollary, the directions to be pursued are predicated on knowing the needs of the target group and their channels of communication, stimulating the processes of community participation and decision-making, reinforcing the action of agents of change, and influencing the development of institutional and national policies.

In this perspective of durable development communication, what remains to be done is to identify the lines of research to be used.

Historically, where research themes are concerned, attention has always been paid to the effects of the mass media. This focus has corresponded to a modernization paradigm and the utilization of the media to create a global environment for development and the transmission of ideas, knowledge, and new attitudes. It has led to research and intervention with a view to intensifying and developing the contribution of the mass media to formal and informal education, as follows:

* radio schools in the 1950s and 1960s: ACPO in Colombia, Radio Santa Maria in the Dominican Republic, Radio ECCA in the Canary Islands, ACPO-Honduras, Radioprimaria in Mexico, etc.;
* educational television in the 1960s and 1970s: Samoa, Niger, and Salvador in the 1960s, Côte d'Ivoire from 1971 to 1980, Senegal in 1978;
* rural and community radio from the 1960s to the 1970s: radio forums in India and Ghana, rural radio and listening groups in francophone Africa (particularly in Niger, Togo, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Senegal); community radio in Latin America (particularly in Ecuador and Bolivia); and
* interactive school radio from 1974 to the present: Nicaragua, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Lesotho, Bolivia, Ecuador, Papua, Belize, Swaziland, and Guatemala.

It is interesting to note that this trend is now coming back, with interactive school radio, television for development, and the utilization of the mass media in the fight against AIDS. Satellite television devoted to education and development is also the order of the day.

Subsequently, in the 1970s, people turned to the role of communication in supporting development activities and specific projects (family planning, oral rehydration, basic health care, agriculture, etc.). Attention then turned to the potential of small media and community media: participatory videos (Global Village in Bangladesh, Belkins in Tanzania, DNAFLA in Mali, CEPAC in Peru, CEDIP in India), audio cassette forums, and traditional media (theatre, puppet shows, stories, etc.). People also placed more emphasis on the contribution of communication to the promotion of democratic and social rights, which led to the development of community radio and communication agencies in the South dedicated to these aspects.

Finally, during these past few years, interest has focused on various areas like the impact of new communication technologies (satellite, telephone, E-mail, etc.), appreciation of the knowledge held by First Nations, implementation of communication units within government structures for the purpose of analyzing needs, training of personnel, and production of training materials.

Each of these areas has its respective importance and still contributes to stimulating and supporting development communication interventions.

Participatory Development Communication

Recognizing the importance of development communication, IDRC has started to develop a research program in that field. This program aims to support people's participation in their development by enabling groups and communities to diagnose the problems they face, make well-informed decisions, mobilize for action, and assume responsibility for their own development.

We choose to use the term "participatory development communication" to draw attention to this emphasis on two-way communication processes, and to distance ourselves from one-way communication approaches that involve disseminating messages, transmitting information, or persuading people to change their behaviour.

The program wants to give preference to horizontal approaches that involve encouraging dialogue centred on problem analysis and a search for solutions, as

well as bottom-up approaches that aim to raise the awareness of decision-makers. These approaches are based on a process of community communication.

By allowing for participation in development, participatory development communication becomes a tool for emancipating people and communities.

In terms of its overall thrust, the program takes an interactive and participatory approach and stresses the interrelationships that exist in practice among the main lines of action. We call this concept "CIME": **Communication** at the grassroots level, the exchange of **Information**, two-way **Media**, and nonformal **Education**.

CIME

Grassroots Communication

The program focuses on communication at the grassroots level in particular. Experience over the past 50 years has clearly demonstrated that if communication is really to help involve people in identifying a development problem, understanding its causes, proposing solutions, and organizing themselves to take appropriate action, it must start at the community level. It must also promote "horizontal" interchange among people rather than some kind of "vertical" transmission from an expert to his audience. It follows that we must not emphasize the use of the media (which plays an utilitarian role), but the processes and strategies for participatory grassroots communication (feedback processes in particular).

Exchange of Information

The program also attempts to link information to the process of communication. Information is of no use by itself, without a community communication process that allows people to grasp it and make it their own. We must also make use of proper channels of communication that will encourage the circulation and sharing of information flowing from the information source to the community, or from the community to the various levels in the decision-making process, or among groups and communities themselves.

Two-way Media

Under this aspect, the program tries to promote use of various media (including interpersonal relations and traditional means of communication as much as the modern media) within systems of interactive or two-way communication that can be appropriated by groups or communities, and that are based not on the transmission of information or hortatory messages, but on facilitating the exchange of ideas. In any given context, the use of these systems must be linked to a process of community communication that will define the parameters under which they are designed or introduced, the conditions for setting them up, and the ways in which they can be evaluated.

Nonformal Education

Finally, the program takes into account the fact that nonformal educational processes are closely linked to grassroots communication processes. Information by itself is not enough to produce the kinds of behavioral and attitudinal changes that development requires. This means that development communication has to do with the processes of knowledge sharing that allow individuals and groups to organize themselves and to make sense of the information, knowledge, and attitudes that flow through the communication process.

By stressing the interrelationships between grassroots communication, exchange of information, the two-way use of media, and the process of nonformal education, the program supports participatory development communication as a process for facilitating interaction targeted on a specific category of users and specific development problems, for the purpose of producing social change. In terms of research, therefore, the program encourages the kind of work that will help groups and communities identify and implement solutions to their own problems of development.

Establishing a Regional Development Communication Research Program

Considering its emphasis on participatory approaches and grassroots communication, the program has chosen to support NGOs practicing these approaches with communities and coming from various development sectors:

health, basic education, literacy, rural development, integration of women, etc. While other institutions (governmental, intergovernmental, universities) may also be involved in participatory development communication activities — extension services or specific projects — it is mostly the NGOs that are most active in that domain and in need of support to pursue and reinforce their action with local communities.

In a first step, the program also chose to concentrate its activities in a specific region: West and Central Africa. A participatory methodology was subsequently implemented to guide the design of the program. Initially, nine countries were selected, in order to represent regional disparities in this region: Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon.

More than 100 NGOs from these countries were invited to take part in the process of developing the program, and 70 were visited in the nine target countries during July and August 1994. These visits enabled the identification of the region's priorities and needs in the area of development communication and the preparation of the agenda for a regional meeting to develop the program. The following priorities were identified:

Training of NGO Workers in Participatory Communication

The NGOs recognized the necessity for two-way, interactive communication whose objective would not be to broadcast messages or to deliver the contents to the people in a unilateral way, but rather to associate these with the identification of problems, with the research, and the implementation of solutions. For this purpose, the NGOs need to train their members to allow them to develop and implement participatory approaches appropriate to their area of intervention.

Communication as a Support for Basic Education

Many stakeholders identified basic education as a priority for intervention in Africa, but they also emphasized that traditional means are not sufficient to meet the need. Faced with this situation, which has been accentuated by the demographic explosion, the constraints of structural adjustment, and the economic crisis, it is considered urgent to explore other avenues based on communication

and community-based media to support the processes of grassroots basic education.

Conditions for Effective Interventions

An awareness of the conditions for effective development communication interventions was also identified as a research theme. The many positive experiences of NGOs in development communication have been neither documented nor disseminated. To this end, it has been proposed that a review of positive experiences be undertaken and broadly disseminated.

Using Traditional Communication Channels or Strategies and Local Knowledge

The knowledge of traditional channels and strategies of communication used in the various environments where the interventions are made to induce the people to take responsibility for the communication process has also been identified as a priority research topic. Another was the identification and enhancement of local knowledge, to allow both for the bridging in of modern knowledge and the valorization of community knowledge.

Emphasizing the African Woman

Issues related to women and young girls appeared constantly among the priorities for action and research. Among the specific themes highlighted were the potential of women and girls as community communicators, effective strategies for establishing contact with them, and reinforcing their leadership role in the use of traditional knowledge.

Training in Participatory Communication for Grassroots Education

Following the analysis of mission data, a program development meeting was held on 9, 10, and 11 November 1994, at the Institut Panafricain de Développement (IPD) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The meeting brought together about 100 participants — more than 40 of whom were NGO representatives — selected on the recommendations of the missions.

At the end of this meeting, the participants chose a single theme for the program's future research and experimental projects, based on the priorities identified during the missions: "Training in Participatory Communication for Grassroots Education," with women and young girls as a specific target public.

Participants also identified a number of criteria for the election of members of a program committee, and of an African institution tasked with housing the committee. Following the meeting, five NGO representatives were selected to sit on the committee.

Finally, a first meeting of the committee was held in February 1995 to identify the main thrust of the program, within the broad framework outlined at the Ouagadougou meeting, and to discuss proposals on setting up a regional program secretariat in Africa.

To complement this process of developing a research program in Sub-Saharan Africa, IDRC brought together Canadian experts and practitioners working in development communication to a meeting in Montreal in November 1994, which led to a fruitful exchange of insights and experiences. A Canadian consultation on the IDRC development communication program in Sub-Saharan Africa was held in February 1995, just before the first meeting of the committee noted above.

This consultation was held to further develop the process of identifying program themes and to facilitate dialogue on the new research program between African and Canadian communicators. Discussion focused on participatory communication as a tool for nonformal, grassroots education; the program's emphasis on women; training needs in development communication; and establishing a regional program secretariat.

Participatory Communication and Nonformal Grassroots Education

Defining the role of participatory communication as a tool for nonformal grassroots education, as put forward by one of the discussion groups at the meeting, requires a sound understanding of the concepts of grassroots education and participatory communication.

First, it must be recognized that the concept of grassroots education is closely linked to that of basic education.

Basic education was defined by the World Conference on Education for All (held in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990) as education that seeks to respond to the basic needs for learning. It refers to providing basic formal education, nonformal education and literacy skills. The approach includes two key components:
i) basic learning tools — reading, arithmetic, writing, and development of analytical skills; and ii) content — the knowledge, attitudes, aptitudes, and values required in daily life. Basic education may be acquired through formal channels (schools), nonformal ones (outside educational structures), or informal ones (through exposure to the environment and the family).

The concept of nonformal education refers to organized and structured educational activities designed for the benefit of a specific target group, which take place outside the official educational system. Nonformal education seeks to make contact with people who do not normally have access to educational and training structures. It deals generally with subjects related to key activities, such as agriculture, health, community development, etc.

Participatory development communication, on the other hand, recognizes the importance of feedback and dialogue in the communication process. It encourages individuals and groups to voice their perceptions of reality and to act on these realities. As a process based on dialogue, participatory communication, supported by group media, mass media, or interpersonal interactions, may come to respond to the needs of nonformal, grassroots, or basic education. It may also lead to a rethinking of what is meant by nonformal education, as a result of action based on exchanges of knowledge, rather than linear transmission of content.

Several key questions still require further attention and discussion. Research efforts need to focus on: clarifying the boundary between nonformal basic education and nonformal grassroots education; means to encourage participation in nonformal education, particularly by women and young girls; ways to identify and respond to development communication needs in key development sectors; means to assist communities in developing and implementing programs that fulfill their needs; how to integrate traditional forms of learning and knowledge into current practices; etc.

The Emphasis on Women and Young Girls

It is also important to consider the contribution of participatory development communication in fulfilling the needs of women and young girls in the area of nonformal grassroots education.

In the most basic terms, and at the risk of generalization, African women are normally responsible for the majority of daily activities: domestic labour, food production, transformation and storage, animal husbandry, supply of drinking water and fuels, etc. We must add to this caring for children, and assisting their husbands in agricultural production and small-scale, commercial activities to earn extra income.

In this context, the needs to which participatory development communication may respond are numerous.

There is certainly a fundamental need to transform this situation and to change social roles. Women also need to raise their self-esteem and self-confidence and, as a result, change their image of their role in society. At the same time, they must assume a larger role in public life. Women also need communication support for nonformal education activities and increased participation in community development.

In terms of learning experiences, there are several sociocultural and socioeconomic barriers that restrict women's access to education. Often, access to education is largely reserved for boys; the education of girls is seen as a luxury, not a fundamental need. Sometimes school attendance is seen as presenting opportunities for danger (safety, unwanted pregnancies, etc.), when the school is located far from the village. Sometimes, as well, it is seen as a poor investment of the family's money, when girls with schooling do not find a job and leave their community. Sometimes, again, women's education is seen as a threat to traditional community values and culture, since education promotes alien values, and so on.

How, then, can participatory communication support educational efforts for women and help them overcome these cultural barriers? The ways are many, including: locating nonformal educational projects within communities; taking

women's working hours into account; promoting models that demonstrate the advantages of educating girls and women; establishing incentives; developing types of learning that are relevant to the needs of communities; and taking local knowledge into account.

Finally, focusing the program on women and young girls does not only mean identifying their needs and attempting to respond to them. There is also a need to identify their potential for acting as social communicators within their communities, and to seek to overcome the major obstacles that could hold them back. Women will be able to play a significant role in the community communication process only if these constraints are removed.

What Training?

NGOs participating in the Ouagadougou meeting placed the strongest emphasis on training. In fact, they identified the need to strengthen human resources capable of encouraging participatory communication activities for grassroots education as a priority. But the theme of training gives rise to three types of questions.

First, what type of training are we talking about? A traditional type based on content, or a participatory initiative based on the needs, experience and objectives of the learners?

Second, what objectives should be pursued and what contents given preference? We already know that the planning, implementation and evaluation of participatory communication are the three key areas for any intervention.

Aptitudes in the area of program planning, methods of analyzing needs, the grasp of local structures of traditional power and knowledge, and ways of taking into account considerations associated with male-female relationships, are all questions to consider in planning. Aptitudes for group leadership, methods for participating in the development of messages and grassroots educational programs, as well as mastery of the media, are crucial working elements for the communicator. Evaluation is a key aspect: communicators must learn to assess the results of their efforts, by means of criteria which respect the value of participation by people.

Training for groups taking part in participatory communication activities must also be considered. They must be able to recognize the value of their traditional knowledge. They must also be given the opportunity to learn how to clarify the goals and priorities of their community, and how to participate with confidence in participatory communication activities. This also requires a learning process.

Third, we need research on action to assist us in developing training programs and the participation of communication practitioners who can also enlighten us on community expectations. Finally, we need research on how to equip ourselves with communication activities to support nonformal grassroots education efforts.

Mechanisms for Implementing and Managing the Program

Setting up a secretariat geared to establishing the program in the field, as well as developing a mandate for the program committee were also the subject of discussion during the meeting.

Three main points were raised: questions associated with the implementation and management of the program (secretariat and program committee), the importance of communication, and the issue of sustainability.

The discussions largely centred on the structure of the mechanism to be established. The model proposed resembled the structure of a spider's web: a secretariat at the centre set up by an NGO, relying on the heads of networks in the nine countries targeted by the program, which themselves are dependent on the NGOs in their countries, which, in turn, are linked to the people.

In all, six levels were identified: the donors (IDRC and associated donors), the program committee (composed of five NGO representatives), the secretariat (represented by its coordinator), the network heads in the countries, the NGOs, and the communities.

In this structure, the responsibilities of the donors relate to program funding, as well as participation in giving broad direction to the program. The responsibilities of the secretariat are to act as an executing agent, to ensure the identification and approval of research projects from NGOs participating in the program, and to

manage the program. The coordinator attached to the secretariat is, in turn, responsible for operations and for communication between the various levels.

Finally, the program committee is a monitoring committee responsible for policy and program monitoring. It is a consultative mechanism, whose mandate is to provide advice to the IDRC program managers in the areas of program direction, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It is specifically entrusted with the task of studying the development of the program's regional strategy, its formative evaluation, the selection of research projects from NGOs, their funding, monitoring and evaluation, the dissemination of the research results, and any other matters related to the smooth operation of the program.

The participants did, however, suggest adding two scientific advisers to the monitoring committee composed of NGO representatives. Another idea presented was to link the committee and the entire network to a Canadian consultative group and an international consultative group.

The participants also stressed the importance of establishing mechanisms for strengthening communication among the various sectors participating in the program and with external networks. They also emphasized the importance of planning these mechanisms at the very beginning of the project.

Finally, the issue of sustainability was posed, without the participants being able to agree on the identification of specific mechanisms. However, during a plenary session, a useful metaphor was voiced by a participant who was seeking to position this question of sustainability. This metaphor is worth repeating here: "There is a need to preserve the sustainability not only of butterflies, but also of the environments in which the butterflies are born, reproduce, and die." Hence, it would be more worthwhile, perhaps, to pose the question of research sustainability by the NGOs, rather than the more specific question of a coordination mechanism for these pieces of research work.

The First Program Steering Committee Meeting

Following the Canadian consultative meeting on the IDRC development communication program, the program committee held its first meeting, whose

purpose was to flesh out the details of the administrative structure for implementing the program.

The Program Steering Committee

The first decision of the members was to replace the concept, advanced to that point, of a consultative monitoring committee, with that of a program steering committee. This committee would comprise IDRC representatives (and possibly representatives of other funding agencies who could participate in the program later), five NGO representatives, the executive secretary of the host NGO, the secretariat coordinator, and two scientific advisers to the program.

The number of NGO representatives on the committee remains fixed at five. They are to be selected on the basis of their personal merit, skills, and membership in an NGO. These positions are nonremunerated and nonrepresentative. The members are made available to the committee by their home NGO, without any compensation, as an in-kind contribution from the NGO to the development of the program. However, they do not represent either their home NGO or their country. The representatives already selected are to remain, as long as they meet the two base criteria: working for an NGO, and working in the region.

The steering committee is to consider for approval projects preselected by the coordinator. It is also to be responsible for the policies and direction of the program, as well for monitoring its operations.

The Program Secretariat

The program secretariat is provided by the program's host NGO in Africa and consists of a coordinator and an assistant.

Program Implementation Stages

There are six stages involved in establishing the program:

*   establishing the secretariat — includes developing the work program, meeting with the NGOs, and implementing communication and information mechanisms;

- development of research projects — involves training NGOs in the preparation of research projects, as well as supporting project development;
- selection of projects — the research projects from NGOs should be linked to the main focus of the program theme of training in participatory communication for nonformal grassroots education: the selection committee will give preference to community-based proposals and seek to promote linkages between projects researching similar issues;
- execution, monitoring, and evaluation of projects;
- dissemination of the processes and results of the projects; and
- evaluation of program implementation.

Conclusion

At the end of all these initiatives, and at the moment of implanting the program in West and Central Africa, we may describe the IDRC research program in development communication as follows:

This program seeks to meet the challenges of participatory approaches to development. In shifting away from vertical approaches based on the unilateral transmission of information and persuasion to more creative approaches based on exchanges of knowledge and experiences, development communication provides space for groups and communities to diagnose their own problems, identify possible solutions, make well-informed decisions, acquire necessary skills, mobilize for action, and assume responsibility for their own development.

The program is currently targeted at West and Central Africa, and more specifically NGOs in nine countries: Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon.

Using a participatory methodology for program development, the NGO from the region singled out the lack of adequately trained personnel in participatory communication approaches as a major constraint in development communication projects. The use of participatory communication methodologies in the area of nonformal grassroots education for women and young girls was also considered a priority.

Accordingly, the core objective of the program is to strengthen, through research and experimentation, the capabilities of NGOs in the use of participatory communication as a nonformal grassroots educational tool, particularly for women and young girls.

There will be many projects, therefore, attempting to develop, experiment with, and assess the training objectives, content, strategies, and tools best suited to a given context or the needs of a community. NGOs may also raise other research questions related to this overall set of problems or objectives, including: analysis of the nonformal grassroots education needs of a local community; compilation and study of previous experience in participatory communication; experimentation with or assessment of existing practices; and cost analysis of participatory methods.

In fact, the training needs of NGOs in participatory communication support for nonformal grassroots education will require a clearer understanding of strategies and practices in this area, so that they can be incorporated into ongoing NGO training-action-research work.

With respect to methodology, participatory methodologies (research-action, research-training, participatory research, etc.) will be strongly encouraged. NGO research and experimentation work, in order to be supported under the program, will have to be linked to explicit field work, and involve community and grassroots participation.

The project strategy will consist of implementing a research network with the NGOs. To achieve this, a regional secretariat for the network will be established in Africa. This secretariat will be in contact with the program's nine target countries and be responsible for the following activities:

* helping NGOs develop research proposals in line with the theme of the project through a series of workshops in the target countries;
* funding and technical support to the projects selected by the program committee; and
* disseminating NGO research to, and facilitating exchanges with other NGOs, international organizations, and decision-makers at the national and regional level.

Naturally, over time, other crucial components will emerge to refine the definition and scope of the program and the mechanisms for its implementation. The entire process is iterative and in consonance with the philosophy of participatory development. In the meantime, it is our own hope that the program will provide impetus for strengthening the research capabilities of NGOs in West and Central Africa, leading eventually to valid answers to the many problems related to the use of participatory communication for nonformal grassroots education.

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PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Chin Saik Yoon

Introduction

The participatory communication approach was conceived more than two decades ago. Since then, its principles have enjoyed increasing influence over the work of development communicators. Today, these principles drive the work of a significant number of communicators from the NGOs, and to a lesser extent, the programs of government agencies.

The roots of participatory approaches in development communication can be found in the early years of the 1970s when many people in the development community began to question the top-down approach of development dominant in the 1950s and 1960s, which targeted the economic growth of countries as its main goal. During these two decades, the success of the developed countries was held up as the model to reach. Development was thought to be triggered by the wide-scale diffusion and adoption of modern technologies. Such modernization was planned in the national capitals under the guidance and direction of experts brought in from developed countries. Often, the people in the villages who were the "objects" of these plans, would first learn that "development" was on the way when strangers from the city turned up, frequently unannounced, to survey land or look at project sites.

Mass communication played an important role in promoting "modernization" to the people. The radio was one of the main instruments used. National leaders, bureaucrats, and experts broadcast passionately from the cities about the wonderful differences which the adoption of new and foreign ideas would bring to the lives of the people. They talked at length about farming methods, cures for diseases, the importance of sending children to school, the advantages of having fewer children, the desirability of having a stable government, and so on. The mobile cinema van also became a common sight in the villages. It was one of the more popular diversions in rural communities, because these vans usually showed cartoons and comedy films first, in order to draw the crowds, who would then stay to watch the newsreels and agricultural extension productions which followed later.

It was a powerful tool. It demonstrated graphically the wonders of modern science. It showed the beautiful homes and cars of rich Western farmers, and projected the image, voice and charisma of aspiring political leaders. The private sector soon followed suit and sent its own vans to entertain with other cartoons and comedy shows, and most importantly for the companies, to show the advertisements for their wares. Government extension workers trained in the towns became the front-line communicators, repeating to farmers in their fields what they had just been taught in the towns. Posters, leaflets, and other publications made up another important instrument used as a part of this approach. It became known as "development support communication," a term coined by the FAO. The approach had a wide following because many of the earlier development efforts in the South were aimed at farmers (Rogers 1983).

The overall approach to modernizing the developing world eventually ran into problems. Experts found out that development was not restricted to just building roads, piping water, and distributing electricity. Nor was it limited to increasing farm yields per hectare or switching farmers over to cash crops. Many of the agricultural extension projects failed because farmers were reluctant to abandon their time-tested ways for strange new methods. They were also nervous about planting exotic crops which they could not eat but had to sell for money with which to buy food from the market. When piped water arrived, it was frequently used for washing rather than drinking and cooking because the people disliked its flavour. The people were asked to stop believing in spirits and demons and place their trust in science which said things called "germs," which the eyes can not see, but are the main cause of most sicknesses and pain. They had also to remember another thing called "nitrogen," which again was invisible, but affected the yield of crops. Did all this not sound like just another form of witchcraft?

Overriding the alien information communicated to the people was a bigger problem. Because the development had been centrally planned without any consultation with people, the wrong solutions were often pumped down to startled communities. High-yielding rice varieties were pushed, when the real problem was the low price of the commodity. Farmers were given detailed instructions on improving soil of land that they did not own, and which they were at constant risk of being evicted from. Mothers were lectured on the bliss of two-child families, when fathers were bent on having at least six children to help work the land and tend the livestock.

Central planning also deprived people of ownership of local development plans. Development became the responsibility of the government. Whereas in the past, farmers would collectively maintain traditional water sharing systems, they became sidelined by workers of irrigation authorities, who built new channels and dictated the release and termination of water supply. When the irrigation channels eventually broke down, farmers just waited for these same workers to turn up to repair them rather than fix the problem themselves, believing that the system did not belong to them. If the workers failed to come, the system was abandoned.

The expensive failures of the top-down, mechanistic approach were noticed in the cities. Activists began to criticize them loudly as focused on the symptoms, not root causes of poverty. They were appalled by the arrogant top-down communication which fractured fragile developing communities by undermining indigenous knowledge, beliefs, and social systems. They were also furious with development plans which catered more to the interests of the city elites than the people in the villages.

Meanwhile, other activists started to question the basis of the modernization approach. They said that the solution to underdevelopment did not pivot around the adoption of Western technologies. Instead, it rested on the way the whole world was structured, which saw the developed countries (also the former imperial powers) progress and benefit at the expense of the poorer countries (also the former colonies). The developed countries were more powerful than the developing countries, and the latter had to depend on the former for their well-being.

At the macro level, the dependency debate led to mass communicators making serious efforts at rerouting information flows away from the traditional gatekeeping junctions located in London, Paris, Madrid, and New York. Third World news networks were established, and articles written by people from the developing countries for themselves.

Ascendancy of Participatory Approaches

The reaction against modernization (and to some extent the realization of global structural imbalances) gave birth to various participatory approaches. They shared

the common intent of actively involving people who were the "subjects" of development in shaping the process. In most cases, however, this is where similarity ends and a host of differences begin. People participation became defined in many different ways, and this in turn led to numerous unresolved disagreements.

Generally, four different ways of participation can be observed in most development projects claiming to be participatory in nature (Uphoff 1985). They are described below.

* Participation in implementation — People are actively encouraged and mobilized to take part in the actualization of projects. They are given certain responsibilities and set certain tasks or required to contribute specified resources.
* Participation in evaluation — Upon completion of a project, people are invited to critique its success or failure.
* Participation in benefit — People take part in enjoying the fruits of a project, such as water from a hand pump, medical care (from a barefoot doctor), a truck to transport produce to market, or village meetings in the new community hall.
* Participation in decision-making — People initiate, discuss, conceptualize and plan activities they will all do as a community. Some of these may be related to more common development areas such as building schools or applying for land tenure. Others may be more political, such as removing corrupt officials, supporting parliamentary candidates, or resisting pressures from the elites. Yet others may be cultural or religious in nature — organizing a traditional feast, prayers for an end to the drought, and a big party, just to have a good time.

Some development initiatives provide people with opportunities for all four ways of participation. Many do not, and restrict participation to one or two ways.

Most will agree that participation in decision-making is the most important form to promote. It gives people control over their lives and environment. At the same time, the people acquire problem-solving skills and acquire full ownership of projects — two important elements which will contribute towards securing the sustained development of their community.

The other three forms of participation — implementation, evaluation and benefit — have been criticized as being false participation by those who believe that participation in decision-making is fundamental and indispensable to the approach. They feel that people are being manipulated through these three forms of pseudo-participation to accept plans made by other, more powerful people.

Others who disagree argue that the three ways allow people to build up capacity to participate in decision-making. They also feel that prematurely mobilizing people to make their own decisions and chart their own development can put the people at risk of conflict with powerful interests and jeopardize their safety. They sometimes go on to say that groups who mobilize people in this way are actually manipulating them towards conflict.

A number of governments of Asian countries which have met with impressive successes at economic development have articulated their reasons for not being in a hurry to promote Western-style democracy and participation. They are outlined below.

- Asian societies favour collectivism, while Western societies cherish individualism.
- In developing countries, national interests should take precedence over those of individuals.
- Diversity of views can confuse people.
- People must be educated and mature before they are able to make good decisions from a diversity of views; therefore communities in developing regions require education first, then diversity.

Underlining these arguments is a decided preference for a consensus approach to development within these governments. The participatory approach is not favoured because it is considered to be a conflict-based model.

Although proponents of participation appreciate that there is more good than bad in the approach, they also recognize that it has its limits. An international conference of practitioners and researchers working in participatory communication announced three caveats (White 1994) at the end of their meeting. They are described below.

- Participatory communication processes are not a panacea for development. Such processes are not suitable for solving all problems in all contexts or time frames. The mother whose child is dying of diarrhea does not want to "participate." Short-term solutions and intervention are also needed. Participatory processes unearth "root causes" of poverty and oppression and usually involve long-term goals.

- The apparently opposing concepts of "participation" and "manipulation" can be viewed from many perspectives. The interventionist who attempts to "sell" solutions to a "target population" may be accused of being manipulative, and may also be bringing along a whole set of alien cultural premises. However, the participatory social communicator may also enter a village with a particular picture of reality and set of values, hoping the people will come to perceive their oppression the way he or she sees it. This may be equally manipulative.

- The price people have to pay for taking part in participatory processes is often overlooked. It is often assumed that the villager has nothing better to do with his or her time. For every hour spent "participating" there is an opportunity cost: that is, the fact that the villager may be foregoing more productive activity if the participatory process does not lead to benefits either in the long or short term. The social communicator should take this into consideration when entering a village or slum.

Participatory Communication Takes Over

Just as during the modernization era, communicators responded to the shift to participation in development by echoing the new approaches in their work: participatory communication was born. It turned out to be a difficult birth. The people who had advocated participation had done so mainly at the conceptual and ideological level: there had been no suggestions on how to make participatory communication work in real development settings. To compound the challenge, much of the seminal thinking had focused on interpersonal processes — the mass media were not assigned any role in the new approach. The broadcast technology of that period probably contributed to this sidelining of the big media. Radio and television equipment was marooned in city studios located far from most of the people in the villages. Outside broadcast facilities were just being developed and still too expensive for developing country practitioners.

Also, for the first time, development communication was no longer the exclusive domain of the professionals. Ideally, participatory communication was practiced spontaneously by the people without mediation. It was the byproduct of participatory processes and participatory communities.

For the practitioners, communication ceased to be the simple transfer of information. The question of who initiated a communication, and how the decisions leading up to the communication were made, became more important than what was being communicated. Communicators were no longer neutral movers of information, but were intervening actively to trigger changes aimed at encouraging people's participation. In many ways, the "techniques" of communication had not changed. What had changed profoundly were the ideologies and philosophies behind the practice of the techniques.

The emphasis on interpersonal and traditional methods encouraged the development and use of these communication methods, which had been largely ignored until then. Street theatre, folk-songs, speech, and group activities became important and effective channels for participatory communication. Large-scale national communication activities were set aside in favour of small, localized, and intimate programs.

Participatory Communication

The emphasis on interpersonal approaches at first suggested a small-scale, community-based approach to participatory communication. Speech, traditional and folk media, and group activities were considered the most appropriate instruments for supporting the approach. This early thinking ignored the mass media by not suggesting any roles for them. Practitioners in the mass media responded by innovating their own approach to participatory communication. Community radio scored some of the early successes. The large, centralized model of the city-based station was replaced by small operations broadcasting on low-power transmitters owned by trade unions, churches and other communities. The people produced and voiced programs focused on local issues, which were the most current and important to them. Such innovations defined a role for the big media in participatory communication.

The Evolution of Development Communications

Development Model	Communication Model	Broadcasting Approach
Modernization growth	Top-down diffusion	Farmers' radio
Basic needs growth with distribution	Horizontal grassroots	Radio forum
Dependency	"Conscientization"	News exchange
"Another"	Participatory	Community radio
Growth	Social marketing	Enter-educate

A small selection of the methods used by groups working at the community, regional, and subregional levels are described in the following sections of this chapter.

Working at the Community Level

Some of the most successful participatory communication programs were tested at the village community level. The small size of the community permitted the intensive use of interpersonal channels, as well as other folk and traditional media. Described below are the steps followed by many NGOs in implementing their programs. These steps have drawn ideas not only from development communication methodologies, but also from participatory development, nonformal education, and participatory action research.

Entering the Community

The first step usually focuses on the identification of a community partner in a participatory communication project. Many NGOs do this through drawing on their knowledge of the region where they have been working. To minimize risks of failure and to shorten the lead time for the start-up of the project, many NGOs select communities with whom they have worked, or are working. There are two advantages in doing so: first, there is an existing working relationship (which may

not be totally participatory), and second, the NGO has a feel for the needs and aspirations of the community and can match these to the organizations' resources and capacities.

If a "new" community is identified, a slow process of "getting-to-know-each-other" is initiated. NGO workers, preferably from the area where the community lives and works, or possessing a good appreciation for the life and challenges of the people, and able to speak their language, visit the community with no aim except to introduce the NGO to the people and meet members of the community. A number of NGOs require their field staff to live with the communities for a long enough period of time (which may stretch over several months or even a year) that they both become accepted by the people and acquire a good appreciation of life in the community. During this period of residency, the potential role of the NGO is allowed to evolve naturally and informally through the NGO workers' interactions with members of the community.

The success of this crucial first step rests partly on the NGO workers and partly on the reputation of the NGO amongst the community. NGO workers belonging to credible organizations with a good track record at the grassroots will be greatly helped by the goodwill which such credibility brings. The basic task of the NGO staff at this time is to listen to the people.

Preparing to Plan Action

The period of listening and "getting-to-know-each-other" leads either to a decision to collaborate or not to collaborate. If it is the former, the next step is often the planning of the collaboration. Communication plays an important role at this stage. As many people as possible from the community need to be encouraged and provided with the opportunity to participate in the planning process. Meetings of the community are good starting points. The purpose of the planning exercise can be explained and debated, the people to be involved introduced to each other, and the methods for planning agreed upon.

Formal community meetings may be alien to the way of life of many villages. People in these communities should not be rushed into holding such meetings. As much time as possible should be given to informal consultations and discussions; the suggestion to meet should ideally evolve from these consultations.

The leaders of the enterprise will probably emerge at this stage. The person facilitating the process should ensure that leaders are eventually elected by a majority and interference in the choice of the leaders reduced to a minimum. A discussion of the desired attributes of the leaders should ideally precede the elections. After the elections are conducted, there is a possibility that contenders who have lost may decide to leave the group, taking with them their family, friends, and supporters. How the group responds to their departure is important in setting the tone for future interactions between the group and the departing members.

Planning What to Do

A first step may be reflection upon the current conditions, problems, aspirations and resources of the community. Media can plan a catalytic role here. Traditional and folk media have been used effectively in facilitating this process of reflection in many communities. In some villages, members of the community or a local theatre group prepare and present to the community a play about a fictitious place where conditions are similar to those in the village. The play, however does not have an ending. At an appropriate time members of the community are invited to act out the ending or to suggest what the ending may be. This method is effective for a number of reasons. It is entertaining. It is easy to participate in, because the event is conducted in an indigenous art form. It is also nonthreatening and minimally confrontational because issues are being addressed through proxies offered by imaginary characters in the play.

New technologies, such as small-format videos, have also been used successfully. The most famous is the "Fogo Process" (Williamson 1991), in which video is used as a "mirror" to reflect the issues and aspirations of people living in isolated communities. The people take an active part in planning and executing the production of a video of themselves. They also take an active part in the editing process, deciding what to cut and what to include. Besides helping the communities reflect, the videos have also served as highly effective communication between the people and outsiders, typically politicians and bureaucrats. Outsiders receive accurate and candid messages from the people through these videos, and because they often convey intense emotions, are also effective in moving outsiders to action. Replies are frequently sent back to the people on a video. Promises for corrective action recorded in this way are hard to break and help the people advance the issues they are advocating.

"Photo novella" are equally effective. People are provided with a still camera with which they are free to photograph anything they want to make up a pictorial novel about themselves. The pictures shot are displayed and arranged into an order through the collaborative efforts of members of the community. The picture stories help in reflection, communication with outsiders, and measuring progress of cooperative efforts. An example of the latter was provided by a group of villagers living on a mountainside threatened by serious landslides which were robbing the farmers of scarce arable land. The solution, learned from neighbouring villages, was to build retaining walls with large boulders — a back-breaking and long-term project. Photographs of the progress of "rock-walling" and the accumulating amounts of rich top-soil trapped by the walls convinced the villagers to build the walls, and motivated them to complete their daunting task.

A somewhat surprising success in the Philippines is a method called CIPS — Community Information and Planning System — surprising, because it is based on scientific research, which many people had first thought alien and not useful to rural communities. In this method, villagers who have heard about CIPS invite the university where CIPS was developed to send a trainer to work with the community. The trainer begins by conducting a short, informal course on the research process. The course is taught in the local dialect and presents the research process in a simple, easy-to-implement way. The people begin their research immediately after the course. They collect data and analyze them as a group. The results of the research are displayed on large charts, in easy-to-understand graphics, and presented to the community during a village meeting. After members of the community have understood the findings of the research, they prioritize problems and plan actions to address them. The actions are usually written up in the form of a proposal to a local government agency. This method has proven to be highly effective in promoting development activities to policy-makers because of the scientific approach adopted and the data backing requests for action.

Supporting Action

It is likely that if the community has advanced to the stage of action, a group of some kind will have evolved within the community to run the communication activities of the community. It will probably comprise opinion leaders like religious leaders, traditional birth attendants, teachers, folk musicians, actors, and

others with a flair and love for communication and interaction with people. The communicators should ideally be elected by the community, with their duties defined during the elections.

The village communicators may be offered training in communication methods. Such training should emphasize the principles of participation and the supportive role of communication in triggering participation. Traditional and folk media should be used. Other media such as wall newspapers, video, and static displays may be also introduced. But the overall emphasis will probably be on interpersonal methods like speech, group discussions, and presentational skills (to peers as well as outsiders, like government officials). They may be also introduced to management skills, like the best way to sequence communication to support action in the community, and the breaking down of large problems into smaller component parts, to be addressed in order of priority. To be congruent with the goals of participatory communication, all training should focus on communication as an instrument to empower the people rather than as a vehicle for moving information. Communication for the facilitation of action may aim at a number of objectives:

- creating a very clear understanding of the proposed action;
- gathering feedback to ascertain whether the course of action is acceptable to and supported by (ideally) all, and if not, to find alternatives;
- communicating the finalized course of action;
- providing support and appropriate publicity as the action is being implemented;
- keeping members informed of progress and the gathering of their reactions;
- reporting the impact of the action;
- gathering and sharing members' reactions to the action taken;
- planning for the next round of action; and
- iterating the process.

Action should be taken in a series of steps, starting with the most urgent or most manageable, and then moving on to others after it has been completed. This way of iterating the process provides the community with the opportunity to learn and become familiar with the process. Interaction also facilitates increasing degrees of participation among members of the community as they learn to work with each other, and develop confidence and loyalty for each other.

Withdrawing from the Community

NGO workers who help set up participatory communication projects should plan their withdrawal from the communities as soon as the people indicate their readiness to take complete charge. The plan for withdrawal may be usefully stated sometime early in the interactions between the community and the NGO, so that the people can prepare for it — more importantly, it signals to the community that the NGO is sincere about taking participation to its ultimate level, with the people in full control. There have been debates in recent times about NGOs deliberately creating dependence among the communities they work with to protect their continuing role (and sources of funding). The withdrawal should, in most cases, be phased in gradually. It can begin with the handing over of functions normally performed by the NGO worker. The worker can next relocate from the community (if she or he has been living there) and return for visits. Their frequency can be gradually reduced to once or twice a month. Some NGOs stop visiting completely and instead invite members of the community to visit them any time they need to, or happen to be nearby, as on market days or at other times. Withdrawal should not mean a termination of interest by the NGO in the community. As noted in the section on research below, the NGO must keep track of the progress of the community in order to learn from it. The tracking should continue for as many years as possible, because participatory communication processes evolve continuously over long periods of time.

A Practical Approach to Development Communications — 1

Group Focus

- Assessing NGO capacity
- Entering selected community
- Planning action
- Communicating action plan
- Processing feedback and refining plans
- Action communication support
- Assessing and refining action
- Sharing benefits and costs
- Evaluating action
- Iterating process

Eventually

- Withdrawing
- Keeping in touch

Working at a Regional Level

Communicators working with amplifying or mass media have evolved their own methods of participatory communication. Unlike village-based NGO projects where the number of partners are limited, the very nature of the mass media requires a large readership, groups of listeners, or viewers for the media to retain their cost-effectiveness. They realize people's participation by either tracking people's response to their work very closely, or by sharing control of the media with the people.

Audience Research

Participatory mass media organizations usually have some form of strong audience research mechanism. This may not always be in the form of a formal or scientific research unit managed by trained social scientists. More often, it takes the form of letters from readers or listeners, quizzes, phone-ins, outside broadcast units, roving reporters, etc. The feedback and feedforward comes when the people interact face to face, and share their views on the media with media workers. Feedforward is considered more important than feedback among some media workers. Feedback is when people react to stories or programs conceived independently by the media workers. Feedforward is when people tell the media workers what is important for media coverage, and which is the best angle and way of covering these issues.

Commercial stations, which are caught up in "rating wars" and competition for the advertising dollar, probably do more elegant audience research than participatory media managers. But there is a very fundamental ideological difference between what they do and what participatory media workers do. Commercial stations aim to capture "market segments," which they can then sell to advertisers for a profit. Their loyalty in business is to the advertiser. Participatory media's loyalty is to the people. Their reason for research is to ensure that the people's interests are being reported, and that they are provided with an effective forum to state their case.

People in Charge

The other form of participatory mass media places people in charge of programming decisions. They decide what to broadcast, as well as how, where, and when to do it. The professionals stay in the background, looking after

engineering details and assisting in the creation of the programs, when called upon. New technology has made radio transmitters so simple to operate, that the people can do it independently. New technology has also led to the manufacturing of portable audio and video recorders, and desktop publishing systems, which in turn have simplified technical production processes and brought down the cost of operating such media. The availability of low-cost portable power generators has also helped in the relocation of many such technologies to rural settings, so that people there have easier access to the media. The main obstacles to the popular use of such technologies are the restrictive media laws in most developing countries, which limit media ownership to government or those trusted by government.

Most of these people-managed media broadcast or print material conceived and produced by members of the community. What they lack in professional finesse they more than make up for in credibility and feeling. Community radio stations often double up as important personal communication tools, sending personal messages to faraway places not served by telephones or the post office. They also help extend the reach of traditional and folk media by recording or broadcasting them "live." Such media also serve the important purpose of correcting the imbalance of power between the power holders and the people. When operated by fearless leaders, such media can quickly create awareness about incidents of oppression and mobilize local and external resistance to the oppression. Community radio was one of the principal "weapons" in the "people-power revolution" of the Philippines, which toppled a corrupt administration.

A Practical Approach to Development Communications — 2

"Larger" Focus (Using "Amplifying" Media)
- Audience" research   - Feedback   - Feedforward   "Audience" generated programming   "Audience" managed programming

Such dramatic events aside, most of the successes of community broadcasting are to be found in the nonformal education sector (Beltrán 1993). Literacy programs have been effectively conducted over community radio and television stations. Other subjects covered by these stations include gender issues, farming, health,

income generation, workers' safety and occupational health, land tenure, and religious matters.

Challenges In Practice

The application of the participatory communication concept has turned out to be full of challenges in actual development settings. Practitioners have been confronted by either unanticipated effects and problems of the process, or criticism of promoting undesirable types of participation. The long and loud rhetoric around the subject has generally interfered with efforts by the practitioners to bring to life this idealistic social process. Some of the challenges practitioners have faced are discussed below.

Definitions

Disagreements over what constitutes true participation have troubled practitioners from the beginning. These have stemmed partly from differences in ideology and partly from the community settings where work was attempted. The ideological debate has ranged from those who felt that true participation must put people in charge of making all the decisions, to those who have felt that participation at other levels was also valid, and that the process could evolve from these levels towards the ideal goal. Other debates have resulted from the wide range of cultural and environmental settings to which practitioners had to respond and adapt. These adaptations have created participatory communication approaches different enough to cause disagreements among the communicators.

Conflict

Another challenge is the conflict participatory communication frequently causes among the people. Conflict results because this process readjusts the power relationships between those lacking, and those holding, power. By participating, people claim power for themselves, thereby threatening the influence of the power holders. Conflict also frequently occurs among the people themselves. The community sometimes splits into factions because of disagreements over goals and methods of doing things, and the involvement or exclusion of certain members of the community. As a result, participatory communication, which sets out to

address root causes of development, often tends to cause serious conflict. This history of conflict has caused many practitioners to appreciate the need for equipping themselves and the people with conflict management skills, the most important being negotiation and mediation.

Up-scaling

Successes in participatory communication have proved difficult to replicate or up-scale. This is a major obstacle for NGOs interested in extending the benefits of participatory communication to a majority of the communities they serve. The challenge appears to stem from a number of factors. The first is the people-based nature of participatory communication skills. Some people seem to have special attributes which make them highly effective facilitators of the process. They are the "charismatic leaders" who "make things happen." These attributes presently remain elusive and escape identification or replication through training. The attributes of the communities have also been identified as crucial, with certain preconditions thought necessary for success. Up-scaling problems may also be traced to the special commitments and support usually given to experimental efforts by communities and organizations, but seldom available to the same degree in large-scale projects.

Governance

Among all the preconditions for success, the type of governance affecting the people may be the most important. People who live in highly controlled states may desire participation very intensely, while being very reluctant to subscribe to such approaches for fear of reprisals against them, their families, and friends. This represents not only a challenge but also a risk for those setting out to promote participatory communication.

Lure of the Private Sector

Privately owned companies are starting to affect participatory processes almost to the extent that local authorities have in the past. They do so by offering money, employment opportunities and other incentives to selected members of communities in order to seek desired cooperation from communities — incentives not always beneficial to the people's long-term interests. For example, certain

timber companies frequently offer jobs with high salaries to community leaders in areas to be logged, thus securing the cooperation of the communities by co-opting their leaders. People who set out to fight these companies must first suffer all the painful results of conflict with their own leaders. Threats from the private sector are difficult to address because their methods are subtle and usually very attractive in the short term.

NGO Specialization

Whereas most NGOs were generalists in the past, many now work on specialized issues such as water, income generation, agriculture, gender, etc. These organizations face difficult problems when working in the participatory mode, because people often identify issues and problems that are outside the NGOs' areas of specialization. The best solution would seem to be a networking of NGOs sharing specialist skills in response to needs identified by the people.

Coexisting with "Other" Communication

Few communities live in total isolation from the outside world. In terms of communication, they may be reached by entertainment films in cinemas; television, radio, newspapers and magazines from the cities; salespeople from companies; and others, who do not practice participatory forms of communication. Facilitators need to introduce ways of coexisting with, or countering components of the larger communication system, so that people may sharpen their ability to interpret the communication reaching them. One way is education on the workings of different forms of media, and some of the intentions which drive their operation. The other approach is to counter competing messages with alternative information. For example, promotional campaigns for harmful chemical pesticides mounted by companies can be countered by participatory programs on integrated pest management which require minimal use of chemicals.

Long-term Commitment

Participation takes time. It is a process which cannot be rushed to meet deadlines or fit annual budgets. The two- or three-year funding cycles, which typically govern the implementation of sponsored development projects, are usually too short for real participatory communication processes to take root in communities.

Such projects may actually shut down processes just as they are about ready to evolve into vibrant participatory communication. Long-term commitment is required not just of the funding agency but also of the people. Participation takes up precious time and energies (which are often the only resources) of members of the community involved. Programs should ideally be designed to deliver sufficient short-term benefits to motivate the people in maintaining their commitment towards attaining long-term goals.

Flexibility

NGOs and their funding agencies must adopt flexible management approaches in the implementation of participatory programs. They must structure their work plans and budgets so that changes evolving out of participatory processes are accommodated quickly, with a minimum of difficulty. The objectives, anticipated outputs, and work plan described in documentation for participatory projects will probably change as people begin to take an active part in shaping project activities. Such administrative changes should be welcomed as indications of success, rather than symptoms of poor project design. Funding agencies and NGOs which are run in a participatory manner are the ones able to operate effectively with this form of project management.

Ethical Considerations

NGOs embarking on programs in this area may find it helpful to draw up, in advance, an ethical checklist to guide decision-making, especially with delicate and difficult problems. This checklist will likely change with situations, circumstances, and growing experience. Proposed below are some considerations.

Manipulation

NGOs should never manipulate the people with whom they work, even if it appears to be in the best interest of the community. Instead, people should be provided with all the facts and alternatives, so they can make a decision acceptable to the majority of those involved. Manipulation sometimes happens in reverse: the people may try to manipulate the NGO. For example, the people might identify a priority problem within the area of expertise of the NGO just to

obtain the organization's commitment to the community, even though the identified problem maybe very low in the people's hierarchy of needs.

Putting People at Risk

Participatory programs often threaten the interests of power holders, who may then retaliate against the people taking part in such programs. Facilitators should be mindful of such risks and explain them to the people, who should then make their own decisions on the amount of risk they are willing to bear as a group.

Leaving Communities "Fractured"

Participatory programs can profoundly alter the relationships and traditional systems of a community. NGOs must commit themselves to working with the people in completing these changes with results which are beneficial to them. NGOs must not abandon the communities in the middle of change, when the challenges are greatest. Doing so will probably leave the communities fractured and worse off than before.

Training

One of the main ways of introducing people and NGO staff to participatory communication is through training. This can happen informally as a part of events organized by the community, or through structured courses focused on the subject. Past training efforts have concentrated on communicators as master trainers who are expected to train selected members of the community in methods of participatory communication. This has often meant training the people in the communication methods of "outsiders" so that they can interact more effectively with the "outside world." While this will continue to be important, there is increasing awareness that it may be just as important, or even more important for the communicators to be trained in the indigenous communication methods of the people, so that they can participate effectively in the communications systems of the community. A view has emerged that truly participatory communication is the "natural" communication of the people. It is everyday communication which nourishes the identity of the people as a community. Such communication skills are learned over a lifetime and are probably difficult to acquire if one were an "outsider." This section will not attempt to suggest training in aspects of "natural"

communication. It will instead identify some of the skills which are "teachable" to NGO workers preparing to begin work in participatory communication programs.

Such skills may be broadly grouped into two types. The first relates to participatory communication within small communities, where interpersonal and group methods are most effective and feasible. The second refers to programs conducted through the mass media which involve larger numbers of people all at once. In both categories, the training methods used should be congruent with the principles of participation. Top-down, teacher-to-student methods should be avoided wherever possible. Participatory methods should be favoured. Here the division between trainees and trainers is fuzzy, and everyone learns from the other.

Community-focused Work

Some of the most important skills are listed below. A detailed description of what each of the skills may comprise will not be provided here, mainly because such specifics must relate to the culture and ways of life of particular communities where the NGO staff are working. This section identifies "generic" training areas, which may then be "fleshed out" by the NGO in consultation with members of the community with whom they work:

* language (of the people with whom the NGO will work);
* listening;
* negotiation (for conflict management);
* mediation (for conflict resolution);
* appreciation of traditional and folk media (these must be conserved, as some of them may be corrupted by adaptations for development purposes);
* methods of "entering" a community;
* facilitating participatory planning;
* facilitating action;
* facilitating cost and benefit sharing;
* facilitating evaluation;
* facilitating iteration;
* withdrawing from the community; and
* keeping in touch after withdrawal.

Training

For Community-focused Work

Methods
- Participatory approach
- Emphasis on "outsiders"

Areas
- Listening
- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Language
- Appreciation of traditional and folk media
- Entering community
- Participatory planning
- Facilitating action
- Facilitating cost and benefit-sharing
- Facilitating evaluation
- Facilitating iteration
- Withdrawing from community
- Keeping in touch

"Larger" Focused Work

Training may be provided here to the media "professionals" who are responsible for operating various mass media, and to the people who will take part in the management and production of content to be disseminated by the mass media.

Training for the media "professionals" should cover the following skills:

- audience research:
- field-based production;
- negotiation (for conflict management); and
- mediation (for conflict resolution).

Training for the people should cover:

- production techniques;
- management of community media;
- program planning (for radio and television);
- audience research;
- negotiation; and
- mediation.

Training

> **For "Larger" Focused Work**
>
> **Methods**
> * Participatory approach
>
> **Areas**
> * People
> * Program production
> * Management and program planning
> * Audience research
> * Negotiation
> * Mediation
>
> **Professionals**
> * Audience research
> * Field-based production
> * Negotiation
> * Mediation

Conclusion

The scope covered by participatory communication has broadened considerably in recent years. Many practitioners have tried to draw on the experience of a number of disciplines other than development communication. In the process, they have contributed to the start of a long-overdue convergence of experience in the education, communication, and development sectors. This chapter has been an attempt to survey a small number of issues in the vast pool of experience offered by these three sectors. It has set out to raise questions rather than provide answers to the myriad complexities that fuel participatory processes.

After two decades and more of experimentation, many development communication practitioners and researchers believe that they have found in participatory communication the most appropriate concept to guide their work in the developing world. However, it is a concept that has proved to be immensely challenging in application. We may be still a long way from translating these concepts fully into practice. This is a challenge which practitioners working in close collaboration with researchers should take up. Some of the critical considerations this collaboration should aim to study and understand are suggested below.

- **Preconditions**: are some communities better placed to apply participatory communication than others because of the favourable conditions they enjoy? If so, what are these preconditions?
- **Leadership**: participatory communication comes to life when facilitated by the right people. They are the "new leaders" who possess special attributes that nurture participation. What are these qualities? Can they be learned?
- **Conflicts**: are a frequent "byproduct" of participation. What are their causes? How does one manage and resolve them?
- **Impact**: on traditional communication systems when participatory processes take over.
- **Appropriate application**: when, and for what purposes are specific participatory communication methods best suited?
- **People cost**: participation is thought to be "expensive" to the people involved. What are the contributions and resources they have to invest in a participatory communication program to make it "work"?
- **External funding**: classical projects are thought to be too inflexible in design and management to nurture dynamic participatory processes. What is the most appropriate mode of funding? What should donors concentrate on funding?

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COMMUNICATION AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION

■ The Role of Participatory Development Communication as a Tool
of Grassroots Nonformal Basic Education
Workshop Report by Elayne M. Harris

■ Adult Education and Development Communication:
Personal Comments
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■ Participatory Development Communication and Nonformal Basic
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Alioune Danfa

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THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
AS A TOOL OF GRASSROOTS NONFORMAL BASIC EDUCATION

Workshop Report by Elayne M. Harris

Led by Alioune Danfa of ADEF-Afrique, the Group A assignment was to consider the role of participatory development communication as a tool for nonformal basic education in the IDRC program in Africa. Initially, the group discussed the task, the context, and the time available for discussion. We wrestled with the dilemma that effective participatory development communication strategies are built in relation to specific contexts and that our understanding of the IDRC program in Africa was limited. Our compromise was to offer a distillation of ideas from our practice and theory in other localities, without assuming appropriateness for IDRC in Africa.

We reframed the topic by naming two foci for our discussions. The first focus was the identification of **elements** which are key components of our conceptions of participatory development communication. The second was the identification of the main questions and **challenges** requiring attention and resolution to maximize the benefits of participatory development communication in any program or project.

While our backgrounds and experience varied considerably, we were struck by the commonality of our views, rather than our differences, and this held true in discussions of both foci. Statements from individuals appeared to garner group consensus, although the group did not have time to establish this thoroughly and formally.

Elements Vital to Participatory Development Communication

Element One

A clear interest in empowerment as the primary reason for subscribing to and adopting participatory development communication. In brief, empowerment was the agency to name, analyze, and act on problems of significance by those at the grassroots of any situation (problem posing). Some would insist that empowerment is not complete unless skills of critical awareness acquired to

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understand the meaning of one problem have been applied to new problems and situations. Others would not assume empowerment without evidence that a critical consciousness of the root causes of social and economic imbalances had developed, along with problem-posing and problem-solving ability.

Element Two

A blurring of the distinction between **audience** and **producers**. Participatory development communication configured in the transportation paradigm made **audiences** and **producers** distinct and separate entities. In participatory development communication in a cultural model (to which the group subscribed), those who formerly were regarded as **audience** participate in defining the content, the choice or construction of media, the process itself, and evaluation of effectiveness and outcomes. By definition, a participatory model engages people who were formerly **objects** in communication — and in learning — as **subjects**.

Element Three

A range of communication activities, not confined to interpersonal and indigenous communication, but including communication which utilizes the "technologies of amplification."

Element Four

Circumstances in which people at the grassroots were equipped with communication tools and left free to decide, direct and structure communication activities or applications as they saw fit. (This statement makes the assumption that the tools are appropriate to local circumstances and maintenance of the tools has been assured).

Element Five

Application to issues and problems at the grassroots level which touch on structural issues in the lives of those affected.

Element Six

The presence of an intervenor, animator or change agent to spark the participatory communication process leading to a further exploration, undertaken in a spirit of mutual inquiry and exploration, where the intervenor has the same status as those with whom he or she is engaged. This does not imply that the intervenor plays the same role as all the others — only that the intervenor has no higher authority than the others in the collaborative search for understanding. The positioning of the animator in a nonauthoritarian role is common to both the theory of Paulo Freire and the practice of the Fogo Process.

Element Seven

A belief that the degree to which manipulation of people was eliminated or minimized would be an indicator of how authentically the participatory development communication process had been followed. This element was raised in acknowledgement of instances of pseudo-participation. Orchestrated participation rarely benefits those at the grassroots (or those most severely affected by the problem being addressed) but may instead benefit the intervenor or elites.

Element Eight

Extreme caution about positioning media professionals as central planners or decision-makers in implementing a participatory development communication process. This process loses its capacity for empowerment if the production values of media professionals are served at the expense of local people's ownership and sense of agency. Media tools must become the servants of the process; people must not become servants of media. Participatory development communication requires people who know development, community, and media — and in that order.

Element Nine

Intervenors who work without a preprogrammed agenda, either in terms of the ability to attend to problems given priority by local people, or use of any specific communication medium in implementing a program. (This caution is inserted in response to our knowledge of many development projects arising from a central

planning perspective which do not take local priorities and local realities into account, and our experience of noting that some development communicators have predilections for one medium over another, quite independently from specifics of a problem).

Element Ten

A belief that participatory development communication is largely defined by a common philosophy of shared ideas and assumptions such as those named above, not by any particular medium or methodology. Rephrased, not all development projects using radio, for example, would be participatory development communication and not all programs reputedly participatory would be considered genuinely participatory communication by us. Philosophies, or fundamental assumptions about how the world works, define participatory development communication. That statement is vital to keep in mind when encountering new terminology and catchphrases, and in understanding how a process with a different name may have the same core belief structure. In this regard, we referred to **popular education.**

The elements named above are not an exhaustive list. Nor was there an opportunity later to fine-tune, pause over wording, check for internal contradictions or prioritize the elements (other than agreeing that empowerment was to be given priority over all others). Conscious of the passing time, we followed the chair's suggestion and directed our attention to the second focus.

Three questions set the agenda for the remainder of the afternoon:

- What are the main questions or challenges that must be addressed if participatory communication is to be an effective philosophy or tool in basic education and nonformal education?
- How are these challenges and questions related?
- What can we offer today about parameters or helpful directions for these challenges and questions?

The discussion started easily and continued with one idea following swiftly on the heels of another, providing more inclusiveness and breadth than careful delineation of each mentioned item.

Challenges in Participatory Communication

Challenge One

The vital role and need for training in participatory approaches to development, including development communication. Training is needed as much for policymakers, senior administrators, and development bureaucrats as for development communication planners, field staff, and community workers. A favourable climate for success of participatory development communications will not be possible through training of one group while neglecting others. In some instances, a radical change in understanding the nature of development and attitudes toward development communication will be necessary.

Challenge Two

A readiness to acknowledge that effective participatory development communication works toward, and ideally creates changes in the status quo, and as a result is inherently political, whether at the micro or macro level.

Challenge Three

Launching of an action research program to support three areas. The first is a better understanding related to differing decisions among any particular group to engage or participate in a process. This area of concern is generally referred to as **motivation** (although that phrasing is uncomfortably instrumentalist for some of us). The second issue for which research is needed is finding the best approaches to effective training in development communication. Evaluation is the third issue for which research is required.

Challenge Four

Substantially enlarging the resource base to support work and development with these participatory development communication strategies. Current resource allocations are too meagre to sustain the magnitude of effort required.

Challenge Five

Being on guard against too fundamentalist or purist a stand on indigenous knowledge. One specific challenge illustrating this concern was the need to validate both indigenous and expert knowledge, and find an effective means of blending the two. Our ideological commitment to validating indigenous knowledge (partially to balance the positivist's exclusive reliance on expert knowledge) has sometimes blinded us to an appreciation of when and how a blend of both is more useful. This challenge also extends to readiness to change local attitudes which are problematic for development — some superstitions and sexism being two examples. New ideas introduced by way of participatory development communication will, however, be most readily accepted if based on social and cultural compatibility.

Challenge Six

Use of the tools of participatory communication and nonformal education to create spaces and opportunities in which people can do their own work and undertake activities which are empowering without the ongoing involvement of an intervenor.

Challenge Seven

Designing and developing participatory communication approaches which maximize the possibility of their being self-renewing.

Challenge Eight

Supporting the development and adoption of a national language in colonized countries. Since participatory communication is futile if undertaken in a language alien to the people involved, literacy in a native language of the country is inevitably a concern of participatory communication.

Challenge Nine

Allocating time and resources for the recovery and experience of self-confidence by local people is even more fundamental than literacy within participatory

communication. Some portion of participatory communication is reinforcing the strengths, talents, and worth of groups with whom we are engaged, so that their self-confidence emerges and is solidified.

Challenge Ten

Being prepared to respond to the regulatory aspects of communication policy that many governments are now putting in place.

Challenge Eleven

Learning measures of survival for development communication by being adroit and strategic in building effective relationships and good communication with those who control or influence the resources our activities require.

Challenge Twelve

The perennial question of ways to think about which media are most appropriate to different problems and different environments.

Challenge Thirteen

To think searchingly and creatively about the relationship between government and NGOs in sharing responsibility for basic education and nonformal education, given that formal education frequently excludes many people — women and girls, for example.

Challenge Fourteen

To inquire more searchingly into the issues of invitation or entry of development workers with a participatory communication approach and the relationship between this early phase and long-term sustainability.

Considering the constraints under which we worked and the magnitude of our task, I am impressed with what we accomplished. That we set out to create a conceptual map of the terrain of participatory communication by establishing essential signposts and prominent features, including hazards, was entirely natural.

Each of us had a need to consult the others to see the extent to which our individual maps, however hazy or well-defined, corresponded to those of other "cartographers" of participatory development communication. Our report gives you the conceptual **elements** we share. Equally natural was our consideration of the work still do be done, individually and collectively, to assure and increase the utility of our working map for ourselves and those parts of the world's population with whom our work was allied — hence the fourteen **challenges**.

However, we did not have the opportunity to take the task to the next logical step — to define the key concepts separately, so that we could see each in relation to the others, and to delineate the overlap and interfaces. Indeed, we made no distinction between the key phrases, a tacit acknowledgment that all are inextricably fused in practice. I speculate too, that we tend to resist taking a scalpel to create surgical cuts, sensing the potential of such a process to negate practice, which is holistic, sometimes ephemeral, potentially powerful, and always complex. I could not take exception to how we proceeded; as a member of the group, I had the same responsibilities as my colleagues for our choices.

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: PERSONAL COMMENTS

Elayne M. Harris

With the advantage offered me as group scribe, now after the consultation, I am adding another perspective. To be clear about my subjectivity, I start with some personal work history. I have worked for many years in an area of development, for which I have found the concept of **adult education**, specifically **nonformal adult education**, to be helpful and explanatory. Because my earliest work (1971 and on) was with the Extension Service of Memorial University, Newfoundland, I considered learning in natural societal settings (the rural communities of Newfoundland) and use of media (such as the Fogo Process and its later incarnations — citizen's television in Buchans, Newfoundland, for example) in those settings as the very essence of **nonformal adult learning**. That form of adult education I learned and lived experientially in Newfoundland for quite some time, both before I embarked on graduate degree programs in adult education at institutions of higher learning, and between those degrees. In those graduate programs, and in practice, I saw the full spectrum of activities in adult education. I saw, too, how polarized the field of adult education could be, with the revolutionary-radical wing at one pole and the reformist-liberal at the other. (Of course, these terms are gross oversimplifications and do not speak of the glue that holds the field together). Some of the complexity can be read in the works of Bhasim, Collins, Freire, and Youngman for the former, and Knowles and Houle for the latter. But to continue to oversimplify, it is the former — a critical perspective of adult education — that most nourishes my work and thinking.

From inside that perspective on learning, I have focused on media in development and communication for social change, thereby importing heavily from communication theory and practice. As a result, my practice and my position have grown fundamentally interdisciplinary. When I scoured the databases of literature in communication for two years, it was no accident (although surprising at the time) that I was led back repeatedly to the Fogo Process (although I knew it as informal adult education) and allied developments in community and alternate media, radical media, and emancipatory media. Then and now, when reading the development communication literature, I am forcibly struck by the absence of learning as a central and illuminating concept in development communication, and how often I could and can substitute **progressive** or **critical nonformal adult**

education for **participatory communication** in the literatures I was reading and not destroy or take away from their meaning.

The two disciplines of communication and adult education (the term **discipline** being one with which neither communication nor adult education is entirely comfortable) have substantial common terrain, but for the most part go forward in practice and scholarship as if the other did not exist. For example, development communication repeatedly cites Freire, but does not focus on his context of critical pedagogy, a special approach of adult education. The key issues for both fields are the same — empowerment, development, social change, democracy, participation, access, social justice, civic society, and structural analysis. The focus of the work of nonformal adult education and participatory development communication is also the same — people at the margins in some way — the least privileged, the peasants, the poor, and those with less purchase on political, economic, and social power. Of late, adult education has been infused with new energy and powerful conceptual tools by more attention to critical social theory. A major contributor to critical social theory, sociologist Jurgen Habermas, has offered some tantalizing thoughts about **communicative action** and the utility of **technical skills of basic media** to an **ideal speech situation** — the essence of a vibrant civil society or participatory democracy. His work is fuel for emancipatory education, such as that envisaged by Freire. Some critical pedagogues inside adult education share my conviction that unless adult education imports or blends insights from communication, the work of critical pedagogy on behalf of these groups will be the poorer.

Since I am familiar with the literatures and practice of nonformal adult education, I write inside that perspective to persuade other colleagues to join me in interdisciplinary inquiry and to reform graduate programs in adult education so that communication is given more attention. Although my interdisciplinary stance is frequently affirmed in practice from many parts of the world and by scholars outside North America, only recently in Canada has development communication looked towards adult education in an interested fashion. Much of the recent interest from communicators in adult learning has been confined to distance education, and distance education technologies in particular. Since the bulk of Canadian distance education is inclined towards the transportation model of communication, (i.e., a channel for delivering a message from the centre to peripheral locations — in spite of rhetoric about interactivity), I am alarmed to see distance education taken up uncritically by development communicators.

In meetings such as those sponsored by IDRC in Montreal in November 1994, and Toronto in February 1995, I met people who subscribe to the idea of communication as culture, and I mentally note the obvious bridge between that view (shared by me) and Freire's philosophy of education as cultural work, a philosophy which has informed progressive adult education for twenty-five years. In groups like these, I hear an interest in issues of participation which are remarkably allied to another area of progressive adult education — **participatory research.** I hold no illusion that nonformal adult education has prefabricated answers for participatory development communication (or vice versa), but the similarities of the struggle to define essences of our respective practice are stunning. The benefits of collaboration appear considerable. Both fields of study and practice have much to gain if each devotes a portion of effort and resource to a searching but structured dialogue for an understanding of how the two interface, and how one can strengthen the other.

The discussions for which I was the reporter gamely took on that task, although my group pragmatically reframed it in terms of something manageable under the meeting's circumstances. The discussion group made a useful beginning, but the essential issue could not be completed there. Indeed, it requires a different process and a longer time frame. It also requires a higher level of risk from participants in leaving the familiarity of home turf and stepping onto a different one. We began, and we began well, but there are the proverbial miles to go. The journey will not be a cool intellectual one on which already solidified and erudite theories are exchanged. Instead, it will be a journey to explore fundamental assumptions about how people, communities, and nations learn, grow, and develop **as well as** a journey in which we push past comfortable ideology and fuzzy rhetoric to create and articulate a synthesis, which is a nexus or conjuncture for participatory communication practice. On the voyage, we will inevitably stumble, or even fall, but we can make some degree of falling a legitimate and acceptable part of the exploratory interdisciplinary process for each other. As Freire says in a conversation with Miles Horton (another progressive adult educator), in circumstances like these, "we make the road by walking."

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND
NONFORMAL BASIC EDUCATION: A PERSONAL VIEW

Alioune Danfa

The consultation meeting held in Toronto on 10 and 11 February 1995 provided a fine opportunity for exchanging views on a great variety of experiences in participatory communication.

More specifically, during the workshop sessions, my group delved into current practices and theories surrounding new processes of communication, in an attempt to ascertain what contributions these practices and theories might hold for the field of nonformal education in particular, and for development in general, and to identify the questions that must be addressed to make these contributions operational and efficient.

Discussants adopted a forward-looking approach, which was well suited to the occasion given the diversity of outlooks and contributions offered by the various participants, who were either directly involved in, or were working to develop, research in participatory communication.

Looking at the responses to the questions that were posed, two points on which a degree of consensus was reached stand out:

* the need to apply participatory communication as an instrument for promoting democratic experimentation, liberating productive energies, and creating a sense of community within any developmental program of education and training, if it is to be workable, appropriate, and worthwhile; and
* the importance of taking into account the sociocultural factors peculiar to each situation when introducing and updating methodologies and techniques for harnessing participatory communication in the service of development.

On this second point, it would appear difficult, as the Group report presented by Elayne Harris made very clear, to develop participatory communication strategies without defining them in terms of a specific context or a specific action program.

Nevertheless, in light of the many common features exhibited by developing countries in Africa, we can make some generalizations about the what is needed

for applying participatory communication to support education and development on the basis of:

- testing or confirming procedures for training a new type of field worker, who will no longer be regarded as a "specialist whose job is to transmit knowledge," but rather as a facilitator helping people appropriate the knowledge, talents, and attitudes that are so indispensable to integrated community self-development;
- taking advantage of traditional techniques and support mechanisms for inspiring commitment and active involvement on the part of the under-privileged layers of society, in particular women, who are generally excluded from education and training, but who are in fact not only the keepers of tradition but also the main agents for introducing and promoting progressive ideas within society; and
- looking for new occasions and frameworks for dialogue in an environment where the innate logic linking possessions, power, and knowledge often determines the whole set of relationships, and leads to the one-way flow of information from the makers of decisions to those who merely carry them out, thus impeding the economic, social, and cultural emancipation of the masses.

These, in my view, are the central questions and priorities. Each of them, in their various aspects, and depending on the specific context at hand, could be a major theme of research-action programs in participatory communication as applied to grassroots education in Africa.

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WOMEN AND COMMUNICATION

■ The Potential of Women and Young Girls
  as Community Communicators and Their Specific
  Nonformal Basic Education Needs
  Workshop Report by Awa Adjibade, Affoué K. Sangaré,
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■ The Potential of Women and Young Girls: Shared Reflections
  Jennifer Welsh, Awa Adjibade and Affoué K. Sangaré

■ Women and Communication: A Personal Comment
  Affoué K. Sangaré

■ Communication and Nonformal Education — Role and Needs of
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  Awa Adjibade

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THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AND YOUNG GIRLS AS COMMUNITY COMMUNICATORS AND THEIR SPECIFIC NONFORMAL BASIC EDUCATION NEEDS

Workshop Report by Awa Adjibade, Affoué K. Sangaré,
Caroline Newton and Jennifer Welsh

The group discussion focused on three significant areas:

* the special needs, barriers and opportunities in reaching out to, involving, and communicating with women;
* the knowledge base defined as "women's knowledge," which is often invisible or disparaged; and
* the needs, barriers, and opportunities for women as communicators.

We summarized our discussion under three headings: **needs, potential**, and **barriers**, often finding that "needs" were simply the flip side of the "barriers."

Needs

* Before even beginning to think about specific needs related to women's potential as community communicators, we acknowledged that the whole **needs assessment process** must be **participatory**, and in this way be seen as part of the very process that is respectful of the community itself.
* **Women's knowledge**, which is "taken for granted" at best, needs to be **valorized** to create a community of learners. The need to recognize "women's knowledge" challenges the usual structures and processes of knowledge creation in most societies. It also forces another layer of theorizing and practice within the approach of participatory development.
* There must be **confidence in women's skills and knowledge.** It is more than an act of reconceptualizing knowledge. It is an act of giving power to women as leaders or true partners.
* There needs to be **enough time** for women to participate. And there needs to be **support for those women**, not only in undertaking new responsibilities, but in carrying out their other tasks.

- Women need to learn **negotiation skills to communicate with men**, both individually and collectively.
- More **research** is needed on **the experience of women in communication.**
- There are many existing **structures for women.** These are important for enhancing women's skills and potential, and there is a need for young women to learn how to integrate into these structures.

Potential

- The focus on women as community communicators was discussed in a way that was **inclusive of men.** The involvement of men was frequently discussed in terms of getting their permission for certain undertakings. But, in another way, the involvement of men was seen as a way of making a project credible and representative of the interests of the entire community. Seen from another angle, the focus could be on stressing, to the community, the real advantages of empowering and involving women as real partners. In other words, there is a wish to avoid sex-segregated initiatives as much as possible.
- Women are frequently involved in **traditional "folk" media** such as song, dance, theatre, stories, etc. There were interesting examples of how these are being adapted to contemporary circumstances. The comic relief, and spirit of play and entertainment, offer real potential in communicating certain issues, especially sexuality.
- **Existing structures of women's organization and communication** offer a starting point for enhancing women's roles as community communicators. Where these do not exist, new structures need to be developed.
- It is clear that women are already communicating in multiple settings: in their families, communities, nationally, and in their work and profession. This is the basis for their future potential. It may be that we need to "look again," to reexplore and redefine the current processes to **appreciate and understand all dimensions of women's communication experience.** This would be a first step, prior to developing enhanced ways of negotiating.

Obstacles

- Women need to **develop their own vision** and become conscious of their potential. They need to develop their own **autocritique**.
- The **participation process takes time.** The process we propose is not just "project-related," but one that is deeper, reexamining all our assumptions around knowledge, learning, self-concept, and participation.
- **Lack of listening** on the part of **"outsiders"** is another barrier. The outsiders could be outside the community, the culture, or more abstractly, those who are "outside the new understanding" that is being initiated.
- **Differences in education between boys and girls**, within the home, community, and school system, present an obstacle. The obstacle is not only in terms of literacy and "formal" knowledge, but also in terms of different aspirations and expectations for life.
- **The marginalization of women by society, which is also internalized by women**, is another barrier. This relates to the dynamic interaction between women's communication and the society. On the positive side, it leaves open the possibility of **intervening for change at any point.**

The Potential of Women and Young Girls: Shared Reflections

Jennifer Welsh, Awa Adjibade and Affoué K. Sangaré

If there was a central theme in the workshop on women and girls for us, the theme was **time**. The western concept of time is that **time is money**, but the more grounded sense of time is that **time is life itself**. It is what we have, or what we are granted, when we are born.

For girls and women, their time (their life) is not their own. It exists (they exist) in the service of their community, but particularly in the service of their men, be they brothers, fathers, or husbands. Hence, if any participatory community initiative is to succeed, one needs to get the permission of the husband, the father, or the head man of the village.

Some of us from the West wanted to explore with our African colleagues the place of **anger** in mobilizing women. We had found it effective in our western women's movement. Indeed, we reminded ourselves, that not too many decades ago our foremothers were asking a similar kind of permission of the men in their worlds. It is as though the right to our time and to make our own decisions feels as basic to us now as the right to our very lives.

There was another theme around **time** that focused on the relentlessness of the demands on women's labour. When thinking about when and how one might "encounter" or meet with women in Africa, we were reminded of the nature of their daily lives: cooking, collecting and transporting fuel and water, and working in the fields. There were traditions that allowed a break from fieldwork, however. Wednesdays, or sometimes the days of the full moon, we learned, were days when women might be free to be contacted during the day. Otherwise, participatory development workers just had to do their work at night to "catch" the women at the end of their (work) day.

What about **schooling**? We discussed, very briefly, whether basic education took place in the school, the home, or the community. We did not spend much of our group time on this. The question was not framed from women's experience. These were academic questions. Learning, we know, is everywhere. It is the colonizers who "distinguish" the schooling knowledge, from the knowledge of lived

experience and daily life. Yet we also knew that we wanted women to be schooled, to be literate; not to negate their indigenous knowledge, but to open the doors of new sources of information, inspiration, and self-reflection. We knew, but heard again, that this privilege was rarely bestowed on girls, and should there be any shortage of money for schooling, or demands for domestic or other labour to support the family, it was the girl's schooling that would be considered "dispensable."

When our group reported in the plenary session, we were reminded that many of the issues affecting the literacy of girls and women affected men as well. Of course, we knew this. But in the three hours devoted to the "special disadvantage" faced by the female half of the population, we wanted to focus our attention on the story of the "added" disadvantage of women. This is not to discount the pain of illiteracy for men. But it is a moment of acknowledging the added humiliation of knowing that girls' chances for schooling are compromised and sacrificed more often than their brothers'.

Similarly, regarding **self-concept**, we focused on the particular disadvantage that women experience. And we learned, in varying ways, that this is an issue for all women — rich or poor, rural or urban. The need to ask permission, the assumption of freedom for males but not for females, the assumption that women must dedicate their time to domestic and family responsibility, is part of a universal gender experience. Our African guests played out how this works "even in intellectual families."

We know, and were reminded, that the experience of low self-concept exists for both men and women. It could be based on a fear of being thought less intelligent (less schooled, less literate, speaking a dialect rather than a "link language," a colonizer's language), or less sophisticated (more rural, traditional). And, of course, these are "challenges" or "obstacles" for both men and women: but they are magnified for women.

We were encouraged to **involve men** in our participatory programming, not only in terms of getting their permission, but also in order to "convert" them to the wisdom of women's participation in development. We learned that they are very often moved to agreement by the clear benefits for their family and household, and that they often feel a sense of pride in the success of their wives. Similarly, village chiefs can see the advantage, and will often mandate the support of

women's projects. We also learned of the risks to the status quo of enhancing women's economic self-reliance. Higher rates of divorce were cited, and in a more general way, a sense of the risk to the existing power relations associated with increasing women's literacy, or indeed, men's literacy.

Another theme around **time** had to do with the style and commitment of the participatory development facilitators. Good practice takes so much time it is costly: it takes time in planning and implementing, and then there is the question of "durability" or "sustainability" — more jargon, to the ears of an outsider. (How language creates distance is another theme.)

We heard a story which described the everyday practice of saying, "How are you?" in a village setting, which could, as likely as not, generate an interaction of 10 minutes, with a recounting of one's dreams, and thoughts on interpreting them. The question, "How are you?" was sincere, and was understood as such, in contrast to the Parisian practice, familiar to African intellectuals, of greeting each other with kisses in the air, and a rather more perfunctory, "how are you?" It was the village practice that modeled the "listening" that we knew was part of our goal as professionals. We were uneasy not only on account of the **time** it takes, but also because of the need for commitment to really place trust in people's "indigenous knowledge," and the humility to realize that it was our job to do the understanding — to unravel, disclose and celebrate both the content and context of what "uneducated" people (men and women) know.

From feminism, we draw the expression "knowledge by, for, and about women." In a way, by studying and discussing the most oppressed of the oppressed (the girls and women), we get a sense of the "double exposure" of the colonization of women carried out in both the public and private spheres. Yet women, we know, have incredible strength, and imagination, often drawn from a dedication to the people they love. The potential is there; it is being developed and supported.

A poignant comment was made by Victoria Freeman at the conclusion of the group reporting and discussion. She expressed the feeling, on the part of many of the Canadian women in the group, that we needed far more time to grasp the situation, and to think about whether there were ways in which our experience would be relevant in Africa. We felt we had only just begun.

WOMEN AND COMMUNICATION: A PERSONAL COMMENT

Affoué K. Sangaré

Education or School Attendance?

If **learning** is seen as being synonymous with **education**, then an African young girl obtains that education, first within the family, from her mother. Later, responsibility for her education is assumed by the community, through initiation rituals.

If it is **school attendance**, then parents do not see this as an absolute necessity for a girl, given their understanding of the key purpose of a girl's life, which is to get married to carry on the family blood line. Viewed from this perspective, there is no need for her to go to school.

People have no difficulty in understanding that a little boy needs to acquire knowledge from outside sources, so that he will be able to take care of his sister and his wife. He is taught to take responsibility for his "delicate" sister.

It is clear that a number of factors that have an impact on the literacy and school attendance of women and young girls also affect men and boys.

Yet above all, there is a need to grasp the fact that being born a girl constitutes a serious obstacle to her school attendance. This is because:

* when economic difficulties force parents to make a choice, the girl will be the one to be sacrificed; and
* the situation may arise where the girl is taken out of school to get married.

This is rarely the case for a boy.

These are just two of many examples that make the point that a young girl encounters obstacles to school attendance that relate specifically to the fact that she is a **woman.**

The education-school attendance component has not been the subject of much discussion to date, because there has been a need to define the distinction between those concepts clearly, to focus the debate properly.

Self-image

An education that teaches you always to seek the permission of a third party before taking action, ends up by giving you a very poor self-image.

Men may, indeed, lack self-confidence; but what must be understood here is that the young girl has been trained to be dependent on men, and to always request their permission. She is not free to take action or express her views. She ends up believing herself incapable to do so.

Communication

In the area of communication, African women have traditional knowledge which they disseminate through local communication channels: they are the guardians of tradition. This represents a significant potential that could be used to further community goals.

All forms of participatory communication allow this traditional knowledge to be updated, so that better use can be made of it.

It should be noted that this knowledge can only be revealed with the approval of men.

Hence, it is fairly evident that the first obstacle to a project would be the lack of men's support for it.

If the men do not believe that a project has a sound basis, they may not agree to it, and therefore will not allow their daughters, wives or sisters to be involved in it. This means that the men must be involved in the discussions from the outset.

Displaying Anger

The question has been asked whether women are able to display anger the way Western people do.

In the African community, such displays would result in total failure, as African culture will not permit it.

Men are only going to be convinced through negotiation. Their tacit involvement in projects, therefore, is required.

Women and Time

A woman has a pivotal role in the family. She intervenes in all areas of family and community life.

She plays all her roles in accordance with a timing that may seem to be nonexistent or disorganized to a person from the West. In fact, the perception of time is quite distinct in African culture.

A woman's involvement in a project creates an additional workload, but in no way reduces her daily burden of tasks.

In order for any development project to become established in a region, it will need to fit in with the timing of the involved subject communities by making use of periods of reduced activity, and this will not always be consistent with the donor's strict schedule.

Conclusion

In conclusion, participatory communication, which allows for discussion between the **developer** and the **developed**, is the best avenue for enabling projects to meet their objectives in the African region. The needs of women emerge from this type of approach, and these are, in fact, the potential obstacles to the smooth progress of any project.

It is very important not to lose sight of the fact that women's financial autonomy is feared by men, who see their own authority thus being eroded vis-à-vis the "rich" female sex.

COMMUNICATION AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION —
ROLE AND NEEDS OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN
AND YOUNG GIRL: PERSONAL VIEWS

Awa Adjibade

The Role of African Women and Girls

Women are the pillars of the traditional African family, and as such have always played an important role in the development process. Yet they are often excluded from the communication process.

Women are not only responsible for ensuring the food supply (production, processing, conservation), but also for providing and dispensing everything concerning people's health (childbirth, educating children, domestic hygiene, the supply of water and firewood, improving living facilities, feeding the family properly, etc.) All these activities have an impact on women's own health and on that of their progeny.

Women have been doing all this work since the times of our great-grandmothers, without even having the chance to express openly their own point of view about the often harmful impact of all these burdens on their own health. Today, with policies for promotion and self-management in rural communities, many things have changed. There are now new openings for women to express themselves. The new structures are intended to make women an integral part of management and development. Some especially dynamic women are taking the initiative to create their own structures and manage projects themselves.

Women today are breaking the bonds of silence and demanding the right to be heard. In so doing, they are organizing themselves, and refusing to retreat before the many obstacles (lack of legal status, contacts, and experience, no access to credit or extension services, illiteracy, etc.).

There are traditional organizations, known by the names of traditional associations (Ton in Mali, Nam in Burkina Faso, Samaria in Nigeria, etc.) that are instruments of communication and development, and many women and girls belong to them.

Nearly all African countries have become aware of this fact, and modern structures have been created to help them take full charge of their work. These are known as village groupings (of girls, adult women, and the elderly), cooperatives, unions, committees, etc. Today, all these coexist with existing traditional structures.

Every structure gets the chance to express itself in the face of specific situations and circumstances, whether spontaneous or provoked.

These various activities carried out by women are the subject of sometimes very lively discussion.

Nonformal Grassroots Education

Education is still the main means for conditioning the individual. It can be defined as putting to use available means for training and developing human beings. It is also the knowledge and practice of social usages (good manners, know-how).

Education can be acquired in many ways at different stages of life (early childhood, school age, adolescence, adulthood, old age). An individual can evolve in various social settings at the same time and at each stage.

The family instills the basic elements, the community and surroundings complement the individual's moulding, and it is perfected by personal experience. Schooling is supposed to reinforce what other influences have already instilled. Generally, girls and boys follow different paths from birth, as a reflection of the roles and responsibilities that the family and society set for each sex.

Educational settings have differing effects, depending on whether they are urban or rural. J.J. Rousseau said, "**We shape plants through husbandry, and people through education.**" This statement explains quite nicely the role and influence of education in the perception of the relationship between men and women.

It is often said in Africa that women are not the equals of men, that they should be content with family duties, and submit to the demands of custom.

Community Expectations

If we look at the expectations that the community has with regard to women and girls, we can easily see that the potential for this target group to express itself is very varied.

	Sociocultural	Economic	Political	Environmental
Man	Founding a family Reputation and social position Protecting his family Looking after women's problems Authority figure Educating the children Following tradition Participating in expression of group culture	Assuring minimum for survival Growing cash crops Having money Having livestock Providing equipment Having more farmland	Role in community life and decision-making Being better informed about direction of development Improving his social status Accepting responsibilities	Combatting desertification Mastering the elements Migrating
Woman	Ensuring everyone's well-being through cultural and social ceremonies Being mother and wife Educating the children Following tradition	Having access to land Providing daily food Working at farming and livestock Processing agricultural products Carrying on a small business	Being consulted on decisions Implementing decisions Being informed about the direction of development	Combatting desertification Managing natural resources

Cultural Barriers to Women

Level	Manifestation
Community	Sexual division of labour (heavy work schedule, family planning)
	Resistance to change
	The weight of tradition and customs (limited mobility for women, prejudices, social pressures, etc.)
Management	The management system (level and attitudes of officials, misreading of local realities, lack of consistency, of commitment, team make-up, lack of motivation)
	Means of communication (poor timing, technical language)
	No sexually differentiated statistics
	Mechanical role of women in management committees
Technology	Degree of technical complexity of project
Partners in Development	Duration of project financing
Women	Women's own attitudes (no self-confidence, refusing responsibility, no personal interest, no commitment)
	Lack of time because of family and social responsibilities and sexual division of labour
	Poorly informed, trained, educated (illiteracy)
	Women are poorly organized
	No role in decision-making
	No chances for personal growth
	Conflict with traditional criteria for choosing leaders (project objectives not understood)

Women's illiteracy tends to deny them access to information, and thus hinders the dissemination of knowledge.

Messages aimed at women thus encounter a good deal of interference or "static." We know that communication is essential for any relationship, and that it plays a prime role in maintaining a balance within human communities. In traditional African society, communication is loaded with meaning and implications.

Specific Needs of Women

These needs can be expressed in terms of strategies to be adopted by and with women. They are listed below:

* empowerment ("gaining recognition by taking responsibility");
* grassroots education through the media;
* informing and sensitizing husbands;
* identifying factors and potentials for social, and group change;
* identifying the social decision-making process;
* training women to manage and negotiate;
* recasting policies and development options; and
* using the "gender" approach as a tool for:
  * identifying and removing barriers to change,
  * better information and communication,
  * gathering, processing, and interpreting sexually differentiated statistics,
  * identifying targets, sectors, areas, and levels for action,
  * involving beneficiaries in planning and execution of projects or activities, and
  * adapting woman-oriented activities to fit their time constraints.

The pressure of all their duties often prevents women and girls from being available during "office hours."

Thus, all so-called development workers need to change their habits and behaviour.

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING NEEDS

■ Training Needs in Participatory Development Communication
Workshop Report by Don Richardson

■ Training Needs in Participatory Communication:
Personal Reflections
Macaulay A. Olagoke

■ Training and Communication: Personal Perspectives
Emmanuel Noumossie

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Training Needs in Participatory Development Communication

Communication

Workshop Report by Don Richardson

Introduction

Development communication is shifting away from "technology transfer," "adoption and diffusion processes," and other "one-way, top-down" communication techniques. This shift began with a shift in language and theory, and ground-breaking practice on the periphery, such as the Fogo Process in the late 1960s. A "participatory" shift is slowly working its way into mainstream development practice, and "participatory development communication" is gaining more and more importance in the field of development communication. The move toward "bottom-up," "farmer-to-farmer," and "grassroots" communication is a fundamental reorientation in our field. It also is a shift that is currently fashionable. We have to ask ourselves some critical questions to ensure that we actually change our practices in light of this reorientation, rather than fall victim to fashionable "participatory" jargon.

How can we move toward the institutional and field practices that reflect the radical social and political change inherent in participatory practices? How do we, as practitioners, incorporate participatory action into our everyday (and often institutional and bureaucratic) lives, in the same way we expect villagers to incorporate participatory action into theirs? Are we prepared to challenge our own status quo institutions and power brokers, as we expect others to challenge theirs? Can we "walk the talk"?

We have to take care to ensure that critical and thoughtful practice takes precedence over fashion. It is easy to label something participatory to please funding agencies, ease our consciences, and impress our peers. We can fool our peers some of the time, the funding agencies much of the time, and ourselves all of the time, but it is very difficult to fool the people in the communities and villages within which we work. They know when we speak one way and act the opposite. So do our co-workers and our students. It is not easy to engage in development communication practice that is participatory. Participatory development challenges inequitable relationships of power. We cannot claim to practice it in the field if we do not practice it in our offices, in our classrooms, in our communities, and in our homes.

Training for Participatory Development Communication

Therein lies the real challenge in the creation of training programs for participatory development communication. Training begins with ourselves and is an ongoing life process. Only when we are confident that we are as "participatory" in our everyday lives as we would like to be in the field, can we be bold enough to claim that we can assist in the design of participatory development communication training programs.

How many of us participate in the kinds of grassroots organizations that we hope our training programs will help to spark — organizations such as food co-ops, worker's cooperatives, credit unions, community gardens, advocacy groups, and other grassroots social and political change organizations? Maybe we claim that we do not have the time, or that our official positions prevent us from working in the trenches. If that is the case, where do we gain the experience and the "school of hard knocks" credentials required to understand the complexities, dangers, facilitation skills, and subtle human relations techniques of participatory action? Without the learned wisdom that comes from experience, how can we even begin to design training programs for others?

When we think of communication training, we often think only of technical training. For example, if we are working with video, we tend to think of training that addresses video camera and video editing techniques. In the field of development communication, most of our training programs focus on technology. The human, social, political, economic, and development process elements involved in development communication are often given little, if any attention. The production of media products tends to take precedence over development communication process.

The shift to thinking about development communication as a tool for empowerment and social and political change is new, and we are only beginning to keep track of the lessons we are learning from practice in the field. When we discuss participatory development communication training, the questions that guide our program planning have little to do with technology. Instead, we discuss issues such as conflict resolution, techniques for dealing with "not-so-participatory" petty bureaucrats, politicians, and local gatekeepers, and strategies for gaining an understanding of cultural dynamics and community politics.

Participatory development communication training requires significant attention to human relations practices such as group facilitation and group dynamics. Learning contexts need to be flexible and participatory. We know that learning contexts (place, time, character, relationship dynamics, etc.) help to determine the quality of the learning experience. We also know that learning recall occurs more easily in contexts that are similar to the original learning context. This information is particularly important for training in participatory development communication.

If our training programs are based on bottom-up, teamwork, participant-driven approaches, the program value learner initiative, and learner determination of content, then the learning context will, in and of itself, provide many of the important learning moments. Top-down, instructor-as-expert learning approaches lack the human relation processes that encourage learner understanding of participation. In other words, the training experience must reflect the field.

Field-based training for participatory development communication is far superior to classroom training. Even the technological training that accompanies participatory training is best done in the field. Learners learn best through practice, field experience, reflection on field experience, and learner-initiated requests for instructor demonstrations and content delivery. As trainers, we must try to respect learners' struggles to understand the relationship between theory and practice. We can create a context that helps bring learning moments to the fore, but we cannot "teach" those critical learning moments. We must enable learners to experience those moments in their own way, in their own time.

Field experience and reflection on field experience is the most useful methodology. Learners can sit in a classroom to learn the camera and sound techniques appropriate for interviewing, or they can develop their own camera and sound styles in the field. Tapes can be played back and critiqued among peers, and learners can use these reflective periods to gain insights into the human dimensions of their work, such as alternative interviewing and facilitation styles, as well the technological dimensions such as camera positions, lighting considerations, and audio requirements. The instructor can use these opportunities to inject terminology and new techniques into peer discussions.

With a flexible and open style and a field-based approach, an instructor can cover all the material that might be covered in an expert-based classroom session, but do so with the assurance that the learners will actually use what they learn in field situations. In addition, much more field-relevant content will be covered. For example, in field-based training session in Bolivia, one of the authors noted that university students in a local communication program gained an appreciation and understanding of participatory development communication quickly, and were able to suggest creative methods for transcending the interferences of local gatekeeping officials in order to engage in dialogue with the peasant populations. As a result, the students were able to create an effective "Fogo Process" intervention that enabled two geographically separated communities to share community development strategies, animal rearing techniques, and cooperative enterprise ideas.

In contrast, learners who had only classroom-based experience, tended to want to create slick videotapes focusing on the "problems" of the rural poor. As the field-based learners discovered, these tapes were viewed with cynicism, and sometimes strong anger by the people depicted in them. "Why are they only showing the negative parts of our lives?" the participants asked. "Why don't they show our youth club, our new football field, or the health care centre we built?" Field-based learning moments like this are incredibly rich and cannot be replicated with classroom techniques.

Instructor experience and qualifications are also important for creating useful field-based learning contexts. At the risk of stating the obvious, instructors with no experience in participatory development make poor participatory development communication instructors. As obvious as this seems, it is not uncommon to see highly skilled video production technicians with no development experience hired to train extension workers and community development workers in "participatory development communication." Despite their technical skill, these people can do more harm than good, especially when the cumbersome, and often inappropriate, cultural baggage of "correct" production techniques for mainstream television are brought to the village level.

The best instructors may have only minimal technical skill, but possess a great deal of field experience in participatory development. An instructor's technical skills can be learned in collaboration with trainees, and this can provide the

context for a mutually supportive and beneficial learning environment. The fewer preconceptions the instructor has on "correct" production techniques, the better. Production techniques are almost always culturally defined, with no objective basis other than cultural and professional norms. The instructor must, however, come to the learners with a thorough understanding of human relations, group dynamics, conflict resolution, group facilitation, and team problem-solving approaches to learning. Such instructors may be difficult to find, and they will likely not be found in professional media institutions or training schools.

Summary of Working Group Discussion

About our working group discussions during the consultative meeting on the IDRC program in development communication, two observations are important to note. First, there was little, if any discussion of technological training. Our discussion settled on human relations training and issues of gender, power, and conflict resolution. Second, we based our discussions on our personal reflections from the field. As a result, our discussion elicited learning moments for all of us as we compared and contrasted our experiences.

Our working group's assignment was to make recommendations regarding the training needs in participatory development communication and related research activities.

From our discussion, it was quite clear that prescribing specific methodologies and activities would be a mistake. Canadian participants felt especially uncomfortable about recommending specific actions for use in a context in which they were outsiders. As a result, our discussion group recommended that development communicators ask themselves a variety of questions before planning or initiating participatory development communication training.

The following questions were derived from our development field experience. Participatory development communication training requires continuous reflection on practice and results. These questions come from our reflections on the lessons that we have learned in the field. We believe that asking these questions at the beginning of a participatory development communication project, will sensitize practitioners to the wide variety of issues that need to be considered carefully

before training programs are planned. The most important talent of a development communication professional is the ability to ask critical and appropriate questions. To paraphrase Voltaire, judge people by their questions rather than by their answers.

The questions were categorized into six different types:

- key question;
- critical questions;
- questions about issues with practical considerations;
- questions about practice;
- questions about setting training objectives; and
- questions about trainee selection.

Key Question

- What are the existing indigenous communication efforts, systems, and training mechanisms?

    This question is key. In answering it, training planners might discover that there are existing programs or mechanisms currently in place and capable of delivering, or assisting with the delivery of, the desired participatory development communication training program. Answering this question might lead to the discovery that there are indigenous techniques and training opportunities providing better programs than new programs that might be brought in from the outside.

    This question enables us to assess the current context of participatory development communication and reduces the risk of "re-inventing the wheel," and delivering inappropriate programs. It enables us to identify potential indigenous partners and collaborators, and it helps us recognize indigenous development communication activities that might go unnoticed.

Critical Questions

- Why are we involved in participatory development communication?
- Within what topic areas do we want to train or conduct research?

- From where do our resources (money, support, labour, etc.) come?
- Which is more important to us: participatory development communication process, or product?
- What ethical issues should we consider when deciding the "who, what, where, when, and why" questions related to our interventions?
- What kinds of research can be attached to our training activities, particularly those that value process over product, or participatory-action research over quantitative research?
- How can we improve our abilities to be self-critical and reflective with regard to our development communication practices?
- How can we change our tendency toward "top-down" thinking, especially when so many of us work within "top-down" bureaucracies and institutions?

Questions on Issues with Practical Considerations

- What duration is best for participatory development communication activities and projects? Should our programs run for weeks or decades? How does program duration correspond to program evaluation?
- How do we work together and build collaborative partnerships across organizational and cultural lines, with regard to program process, content, and adaptation of content and process to context?
- How do we maximize our cost-benefit ratio? To what extent should a grassroots, participatory development communication program involve the mainstream mass media to maximize the cost-benefit ratio?
- What media (in the largest sense of the word) are already available?
- How do we deal with:
  - intercultural differences?
  - intracultural differences?
  - power issues?
  - conflicts?
  - conflict resolution?

Questions on Practice

- How do we (can we) facilitate a grassroots, participatory approach and work with gatekeepers?
- How can we transcend prior "top-down" learning, attitudes, and values of facilitators, planners, gatekeepers, evaluators, funding agencies, and other stakeholders (including ourselves)?
- How do we ensure "sustainability?" What do we mean by "sustainability," and from whose perspective do we describe it? From the perspective of the participants, or of the funding agencies and evaluators?
- Given a context of resource restriction, how can we make participatory development communication more cost-effective?
- Should we compensate participants, and if so, how?
- What are the criteria for selecting trainees and participants?
- Who is going to do the training and research? Grassroots leaders? Indigenous (largely urban-based) NGOs? Western consultants? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these cohorts of trainers? What are the intercultural and intracultural issues we will face?
- How will we deal with gender issues with regard to participatory development communication programming, training, and research?
- How will we generate demand for training? Is there an existing demand for training? If not, why are we proceeding?
- How do we explain the "participatory" approach to participants? How do we explain the potential dangers of this approach to participants, especially with regard to disturbing power balances and the status quo?
- How can trainers and facilitators learn about local community dynamics and power structures?

Questions on Setting Training Objectives

- What, exactly, do we expect to happen as a result of our interventions? For example, do we hope to:
  - · enhance participatory communication capacity within communities or nations?
  - · enhance basic education?
  - · enhance "development?"
  - · create opportunities for empowerment and social change?
- How important are social and political change goals to our program? If they are not important, why are we using a participatory approach, an approach that always tends to involve direct or indirect challenges to existing power relationships? Are we using a "participatory" approach because it is trendy? Or are we committed to working through the complexities and challenges of a participatory approach?
- Do we give people objectives? Or do we assist people in setting their own objectives? If the latter, how do we relate this to the demands of funding agencies and evaluators who ask us for predetermined objectives and well-crafted "logical framework analyses" and other project planning documents before we begin?
- How do we design evaluation methods based on objectives derived from grassroots, participatory approaches? Should our evaluation methods also involve grassroots, participatory approaches? If so, who evaluates: outsiders, participants, or a combination of both?
- How do we ensure balanced internal and external evaluations?

Questions on Trainee Selection

- Who are the trainees? (This is not an exhaustive list.)
  - · rural or urban?
  - · local grassroots development workers?
  - · teachers?
  - · both genders? (Do we take a "Gender and Development" [GAD] approach?)
  - · peer educators?
  - · community leaders?

- · youth leaders?
- · community development and extension workers?
- · religious leaders?
- · communication "professionals"?
- · literacy educators?
- · health practitioners?
- · media producers?
- · policy-makers and government officials?
- Which of our identified trainees can also work as trainers? Are we fully utilizing the resource people and skills available to us?
- How do we recognize and incorporate the different training needs and requirements for diverse groups of trainees?

Conclusion

Designing training programs for participatory development communication is not a simple matter. These training programs do not involve old-style, lecture-based transfers of information from trainer to learner. Participatory development communication requires a participatory training context, preferably one that is field-based. Planners who design training programs must be prepared to ask and answer difficult questions about the nature and expected outcomes of their initiatives. They must also be prepared to engage in consultations with diverse groups of stakeholders and be ready to respond to the needs and views of those stakeholders. Most importantly, planners must work hard to identify and explore indigenous communication activities, systems, and mechanisms. It is within these indigenous communication activities that the planner of training programs has the empowering opportunity to become a learner.

TRAINING NEEDS IN PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION:
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Macaulay A. Olagoke

There is no doubt that participation has become one of the most "valuable" buzzwords among development practitioners and supporters throughout the world within the last decade.

However, as has been well articulated by many other writers, a large number of the projects that have been supported by funders in the recent past were participatory only on paper.

This situation raises much concern. This is because even in its most sincere form, participation, at least for some years to come in most of the developing countries, has to be catalyzed from outside the rural settlements, owing largely to the related problems of limited sociopolitical awareness, low literacy, and high poverty levels. In other words, much of what happens to participation in the developing countries still depends on the sincerity of the practitioners, who still play the role of "introducing" participation at the local levels.

The direct implication of the foregoing is that a lot of awareness creation and appropriate literacy programs among the local people will be required to engender sustainable development in most of our rural communities.

We need to aim for the point where the local people will not only be able to recognize, but also to challenge disguised exploitation coming in the form of participation.

On an additional note, it will be necessary to emphasize that one of the ways to ensure effectiveness is for rural development practitioners and supporters to recognize that our role should be limited to that of catalyzing a process. And this necessarily implies that the intervention mechanism should incorporate some valid elements that will enable the local people to continue with the process towards clearly identified objectives: employing resources that they can generate (both locally and otherwise) and manage by themselves, on a sustainable basis.

It therefore follows, that as a basis for any technological or vocational training needs identified over time, the program proposed by IDRC should emphasize research and training activities that will:

- answer the key question: What are the existing indigenous communication efforts, systems, and training mechanisms?
- reduce the high level of illiteracy through appropriate formal and nonformal educational events;
- improve the level of sociopolitical awareness among the rural populace through appropriate approaches; and
- enable the local people to realize their enormous potential with respect to the process of socioeconomic development.

In other words, emphasis should be placed on activities (particularly training programs) that will help local people realize that by working together, they themselves have the capacity to improve their own lives, at least to some extent, with or without external assistance.

Finally, the proposed program should incorporate a workable follow-up or evaluation plan, as already discussed extensively during our follow-up committee meeting in Toronto.

On a specific note, the follow-up or evaluation should be structured so as to:

- review the program in line with the proposed project plan (schedules, objectives, etc.); and
- enable the transfer of the program to the local people in a way that ensures the successful continuation of the specific projects after the exit of the catalysts.

The foregoing may be some of the steps necessary toward the actualization of the culture of participation in the process of sustainable development in most of our rural communities.

TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Emmanuel Noumossie

Introduction

Since they were first colonized and later experienced independence, people, particularly those at the village community level, were accustomed to responding to, implementing, and following orders that came "from above," without understanding the reasons why.

The "provider" state also kept these people in a state of total dependency; this was also the way international donors operated, who, in turn, made them accustomed to receiving "manna from heaven."

Hence, what this approach involves is to find ways to assist these people without making judgements as to who has been right or wrong, to become involved, or to get them involved in all the decisions that relate to them. This can only be achieved through participatory development communication and basic education, which may also be referred to as development facilitation or self-advancement.

Training Needs

Even without the benefit of a scientific investigation, it is obvious that the needs are enormous. A quick review of the approaches used by development staff of the state and even the majority of NGOs is sufficient to indicate that these approaches are generally directive, "popularization techniques," which merely consist of transferring knowledge or techniques without any involvement by the receiving party.

A similar review of basic institutions also provides an adequate base for concluding that the approaches of the majority of the leaders often comes close to those of dictatorships.

In every type of organization, whether state, NGO, or basic institutions, this approach is always justified on the basis of a lack of "democracy."

However, it should also be said that the situation could not be otherwise, since everyone working in Africa today has been educated in classical schools, where the principals and teachers were highly coercive. People very often, and without even being aware of it, take revenge for, or behave in the way their principals and teachers behaved towards them.

The Target Public

Starting from the needs, it is obvious that any training activity in this area must be directed, first of all, to public and private sector development personnel working with populations at the village community level, with a particular emphasis on female officials. The other target public is the village leaders, or leaders of community organizations.

Fields

The communication training provided in Africa has often been of the highly classical variety, i.e., it involves the transmission of information, or consists of one-way communication. We generally employ people who inform others.

What is involved in implementing this approach is the promotion of two-way communication: conducting research on the techniques that could help people at the village community level become more active, involve them more in resolving their problems, and take part in decisions that affect them. In short, what is involved is a process of self-directed development.

These techniques can already be identified on the basis of experience in the field, experience from other places, or simply by trying out new techniques on the job and in the field.

Prospects

In Africa, at this time, the development of a multiparty system, which is sometimes wrongly called "democracy" has, nevertheless, prepared the people to become involved in the various changes occurring in their environment.

This process has already facilitated the practice, or the introduction, of participatory development communication and basic education.

Thus, it would be very useful to undertake action research in this field to change the mental outlook of development personnel. It would also be very beneficial for the people at the village community level, who are very often affected adversely.

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APPENDICES

■ Profiles of Workshop Participants

■ African Organizations Associated with Program Development

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APPENDIX 1 — PROFILES OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

1. Members of the Steering Committee (African Research Network in Participatory Development Communication)

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Awa Adjibade is a sociologist and adviser in training and research at PAID-AOS. Her responsibilities include women and development, adult education, the administration of local community groups and businesses, project management and evaluation.

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Alioune Camara

Alioune Camara has a postgraduate degree in public law (international relations option) and has specialized in the area of information sciences. Following three years of teaching documentation studies at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, he has dedicated approximately a decade to setting up information networks and systems on the development of Sahelian countries to support the programs of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, an organization that brings together nine countries of the subregion. In this capacity, he has been involved in the development of a number of national and regional sectoral information systems, with particular emphasis on the fields of agriculture and natural resource management. His main area of interest has focused on grassroots information and communication approaches as these relate to the policies of decentralization and the attempts to introduce democracy to the region.

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Guy Bessette is a Senior Program Officer at IDRC and responsible for a research program in development communication. The program is targeted towards Sub-Saharan Africa and stresses participatory and grassroots communication processes. Concurrent with these activities, the program aims to facilitate the development of partnerships between, and with, Canadian and international researchers, practitioners and organizations, and to promote joint activities for advocacy with decision-makers at all levels. Guy Bessette has a Ph.D. in education technology from the University of Montreal.

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2. Participants

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Madeleine-Ann Aksich heads the International Children's Institute (ICI), a nonpolitical, nongovernmental, humanitarian organization. Established in 1992 and based in Canada, the Institute represents major hospitals, universities, and associations in North America. The mission of the Institute is to assist the children of the world to overcome the psychological traumas resulting from natural and human disasters.

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Robert S. Anderson currently heads the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University (SFU), after having served as the first Director of the Community Economic Development Centre at the same university. An anthropologist by training and a holder of a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago (1970), he has been involved in development communication projects in India, Bangladesh, Jamaica, Thailand, and China.

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Sylvie I. Cohen

Sylvie I. Cohen joined the staff of the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) in 1990 as a technical officer in the Education, Communication and Youth Branch (Technical and Evaluation Division), after having spent six years at UNICEF in the same area of activities. Over the past twenty years, she has specialized in development communication. Her contributions were instrumental in the establishment, in 1994, of the first regional training program for francophone Africa, funded by the UNPF through the IEC, in cooperation with the University of Côte d'Ivoire.

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Edna Einsiedel is a professor and the Director of the Graduate program in Communication Sciences at the University of Calgary. She also coordinates the Undergraduate and Master's program in development studies. She has participated in development projects in the Philippines and Nigeria as well as in Canada, particularly in the area of strategic communication planning. Edna has also directed intercultural training seminars and conducted research work in participatory development.

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Evelyne Foy

Evelyne Foy has collaborated in the design, development, and evaluation of community media projects in a number of urban and rural communities as well as in the Aboriginal community, on behalf of American Indian and Inuit peoples. She has worked on development projects in the Ministère des Communications du Québec and in various nongovernmental organizations (OXFAM, Development and Peace) in the areas of education and development communication. She is one of the founders of AMARC and has held the position of Secretary-General since the organization obtained international NGO status.

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Victoria Freeman is an author, community leader, and the Coordinator of the International Communication Group (ICG) at Ryerson Polytechnic University. She has actively promoted many participatory communication and research projects at Ryerson, and was involved in the development of multimedia databases on the controversy in which the Crees and ecologists mounted opposition to Hydro-Québec in relation to the Grande-Baleine dam construction project. She is a cofounder of the projet Écrivains de Baffin (Baffin Authors project).

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Donald J. Gilles

Donald J. Gilles is a Professor of Communication Sciences at the Department of Cinematography and Photography of Ryerson Polytechnic University and is a former Department Head. He cochairs the External Affairs section of the International Communication Group. He was the founder and Chairman of Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada (TEMAC). He has degrees from the universities of Edinburgh, Toronto, and London, as well as from the Imperial College of Science, Technology, and Medicine.

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Olga Gladkikh

Olga Gladkikh is the Communications Coordinator and a lecturer at the Coady International Institute Saint Francis Xavier University. Her professional background in the communications area includes a long association with CBC-TV News and Current Affairs in the Atlantic provinces. She is responsible for training in her field both in Canada and abroad.

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Elayne M. Harris
Over the past twenty years, Elayne M. Harris, Ph.D., has participated in the practice, research and teaching of community learning and education in developing regions. From the start of her career with the Continuing Education Services at Newfoundland's Memorial University in the early 1970s, her outlook has always been influenced by the concept of informal learning as the organizing theme for activities in development, communication, media, community education, and Native participation. During the 1980s she headed the Continuing Education Department at Memorial University for six years, before undertaking her doctoral studies in development communication and community life skills. She has conducted important research in community radio and television broadcasting in Newfoundland.

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Paul Idahosa
Paul Idahosa is a professor and a member of the Political Science Department and the School of Public Administration at Ryerson Polytechnic University, where he teaches Third World politics and comparative political studies. He also teaches African politics at the University of Toronto. He has lived in both North Africa (Algeria) and West Africa (Nigeria), where he recently served as a senior lecturer and conducted research work.

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Abdul W. Khan

Abdul W. Khan, Ph. D., is a Senior Program Officer at the Commonwealth of Learning and is responsible for developing strategic initiatives related to the use of communication techniques and television instruction technologies in member countries. He has worked as a development communication specialist for many organizations including, among others, the FAO, UNDP, UNPF, UNESCO and the United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia Pacific, the Asiatic Productivity Organization, and the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development.

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Bernard Kouassi

Bernard Kouassi acted, until recently, as Secretary General of the Pan African Institute for Development. Prior to this function, he worked as program management specialist for US AID (American Aid Agency). He has also worked as technical advisor for economic development programs at the Ministry of Women's Promotion in Côte d'Ivoire as a research scientist and consultant, and as a cadre in industry and a bank. Dr. Kouassi obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

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Jane Knight

Jane Knight, Ph.D., has worked in cooperation with Ryerson International over the past six years on many development projects in Asia, including the Asia Pacific Broadcasting project. One of her current priorities is the Partnership Program with China, which is involved with training activities and the establishment of institutional, research, communication network, and exchange connections. In addition, she takes an interest in research on intercultural communication and the international dimension of higher education.

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Emil Kolompar

Emil Kolompar is a head cameraman and teacher of cinema, video, and computer graphics at Ryerson Polytechnic University. He has been a director and head cameraman for the past twenty years. The première of *Finest Kind*, a documentary directed by Emil and coproduced with the NFB, took place at Toronto's Festival of Festivals. The film, which describes life in a small Newfoundland fishing village, is being shown to large audiences in this province as part of its community development activities.

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Eva Kupidura

Eva Kupidura is currently a librarian and a community development officer with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). A former teacher and adviser, Eva has also worked in libraries and documentation centres in Poland and France. She is the co-author of the 1968-1992 Annotated Catalogue, relating 25 years of publication of the journal *Convergence*.

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Basanti Majumdar

Basanti Majumdar is an associate professor at McMaster University. She played a decisive role in the establishment of linkages between university ethnocultural committees and in the creation of a course, "Culture and Health," for the benefit of students of multidisciplinary faculties. As a founder of the Ethnocultural Research Division, Basanti published the first Canadian manual on raising awareness of diverse cultures (including Canadian multicultural policies) for training people working in the health and social service sector. Her experience includes community mobilization, intercultural awareness-raising programs and the implementation of participatory and experiential learning. Her fields of research include transcultural communication and learning methods (consultation groups and research through action).

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Erma Wright Manoncourt
Erna Wright Manoncourt, Ph.D., has recently joined UNICEF as Head of the Social Planning and Program Communication Section. She obtained her doctorate in health behaviour and education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1986. She has worked as a university professor for four years, and as an international health adviser for more than ten years. Her fields of specialization include the design of community interventions, the development of communication strategies and the evaluation of the incidence of behaviour modifications in infant survival programs, family planning, and communication on diarrhea and nutritional ailments.

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Lavina Mohr
Lavina Mohr is the Secretary-General of Videazimut, an international coalition of organizations and individuals involved in development communication and democracy. The coalition consists of a network for the exchange and analysis of information and experiences in various regions of the world. Lavina has acquired extensive experience in the field of community broadcasting and has collaborated with several Canadian NGOs, including the Canadian Save the Children Fund.

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Viola Morgan

Viola Morgan is the Coordinator of Gender Role and Development, Political and Regional Program Analysis Division, Regional Office for Africa, UNDP. She is also the contact person for regional education and health issues. From 1987 to 1989 Viola also acted as a communication adviser on behalf of various UNDP services, including the Global and Interregional Projects Division and the Non-governmental Liaison Services. Before joining UNDP, she worked at the Information Department of the United Nations Secretariat.

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Luc Morin

Luc Morin, President of CAC International, has been working as a development communication consultant since 1985. Luc has worked in the health, population, and agriculture sectors. He lived for two years in Niger, where he was involved in ILO/UNPF health and population projects, and more recently, in the establishment of a human rights training program. His experience extends to the use of communication at the community level in the context of studying structural and social processes. In addition, he has successfully directed evaluation and training projects on behalf of the World Bank.

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Charles Morrow

Charles Morrow, Senior Adviser, World Television Service-WETV, is a former Director of Information for the Canadian International Development Agency and the World Health Organization. He established a development communication sector in CIDA in 1983, which has made it possible for this component to be successfully integrated into many of the organization's projects in the fields of water purification, health and agriculture.

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Ruth Nesbitt

Ruth Nesbitt is the Acting Director of Ryerson International. She is also a professor at the School of Nursing. Her field of interest is health communication. She chaired the Organization Committee of the Conference on Health and Communication in the Americas, which took place at Ryerson Polytechnic University from 27 to 29 March 1995. She is also the director of a project to establish university links in Bolivia, in which development communication is a major component.

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Caroline Newton

Caroline Newton has worked in several African countries in the field of gender and communication. Her current job as Coordinator of Community Development for Vision TV includes the design and implementation of programs and policies for community participation in a multidenominational and multicultural television network.

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Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny

Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny is head of the UNESCO chair in International Development and Communication at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Prior to this assignment, she has been Director of Communication at the United Nations Secretariat. In her position as UNESCO chairperson, she is working to establish a network of Canadian intervenors who are active in the field of international communication, and most particularly in development communication.

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Alain Péricard

Alain Péricard is a former journalist based in West Africa and Latin America. He is presently a consultant and university lecturer in development communication. He has also founded an association of African researchers specializing in this field. In his position as a consultant and lecturer, he teaches communication and international development at UQAM.

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Lila Pine

Lila Pine has worked as a director, editor and scriptwriter over the past six years. Her documentary on street children, *Easy Marks*, was nominated for the Golden Sheaf of Saskatoon award. Lila also teaches video production and postproduction workshops, works as a video technique consultant and coproduces a radio show on cinema and video.

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C.V. Rajasunderam

C.V. Rajasunderam works for the International Communication Group at Ryerson Polytechnic University. His professional interest and experience involve research and training in development communication. Before arriving in Canada, he was a senior communicator at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, and later a senior research officer and media director at the Centre for Development Studies (Marga Institute), Sri Lanka. He has worked as a consultant on behalf of the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Ryerson International (former Ryerson International Development Centre), the Netherlands Radio Training Centre, the Worldview International Foundation, and the Department of Information of the United Nations.

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Dale Ratcliffe

Dale Ratcliffe teaches broadcasting at the Ryerson School of Journalism. Before joining Ryerson a year and a half ago, she worked as a radio and television reporter, editor, and producer at the CBC. In her last position, she was a senior producer of the CBC radio program "The World at Six." Dale has also worked with radio broadcasters in developing countries, most recently in Namibia, Africa.

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Don Richardson

Don Richardson is a sociologist specializing in the development communication field. His special activity and interest areas are participatory communication (video, radio and print), community electronic networks, and access to the Internet in developing countries (including Africa). He has worked on various participatory development communication projects in Cameroon, Egypt, Bolivia, Pakistan, and Canada.

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Heida Schaeffer

Heida Schaeffer currently holds the position of curriculum adviser at the Technology and Communication Branch, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. Her areas of specialization at the Ministry are organizational training and development, particularly work with native groups. At Ryerson Polytechnic University (1988-1993), she was involved in the production of a training kit on development broadcasting and established a participatory evaluation process for the Asia Pacific Development Broadcasting project.

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Robert B. Scott

Robert B. Scott is currently the Program Director, Media Arts, and Co-Chairman of the International Communication Group at Ryerson Polytechnic University. He started to become involved in participatory communication activities through the Challenge for Change-Société Nouvelle program of the National Film Board in the late 1960s. As one of the main organizers of the Saint-John Project (New Brunswick), he helped to establish a rental association for low-income people in this city. The project was one of the first program initiatives to use small-format video in a process of social change.

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J. Mark Stiles

J. Mark Stiles, President of Stiles Associates Inc., has more than twenty years' experience in the development communication and training fields, in Canada and abroad. From 1990 to 1993, he was a senior communication adviser at the National Institute of Health in Islamabad, Pakistan, where he headed a national health promotion unit funded by the Canadian International Development Agency.

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Jennifer Welsh

Jennifer Welsh has taught the introductory course in consumerism and family education at Ryerson's School of Nutrition since 1970, holding the position of director from 1980 to 1987, From 1988 to 1993, she was the Dean of the Faculty of Community Services. Food safety and health promotion continue to be her central interests.

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Darryl Williams
Darryl Williams is Director of Studies, Rogers Communication Centre at Ryerson Polytechnic University, and Director of the New Media Research Group, which is involved in a three-year project on the use of broad-band networks for multimedia information sharing. He is a former Chairman of the Department of Cinematography and Photography at Ryerson Polytechnic University. Darryl is a member of the Management Board of the Intercom Consortium in Ontario.

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Tony Williamson is the Director of the Don Snowden Centre for Development Communication, and international liaison officer at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. He has twenty-five years of experience in community development and participatory research among Aboriginal communities in the Canadian North. He was the first Administrator of the Labrador Institute of Nordic Studies at Memorial University, and was the Associate Administrator of the Adult Education Division of Memorial from 1977 to 1985.

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Elizabeth Wilson

Elizabeth Wilson has been the General Director of the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network since 1989. Between 1985 and 1988, she worked for the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines. During this time, she taught communication workshops in seven Asian and African countries, and acted as a communication consultant and organizer of funding campaigns for the President of the University of the Philippines. Elizabeth has been the Director of Information Services at the University of Toronto for nine years.

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Chin Saik Yoon

Chin Saik Yoon works in development communication. He has worked in various Asian countries on development activities organized at the community, subnational, and national levels. He is also an editor at Southbound, a small office which publishes works specializing in development communication.

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APPENDIX 2 — AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED

WITH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Legend   + Organizations contacted by the field missions

            * Organizations present at the Ouagadougou meeting

Benin   Association Parmi les Femmes pour la Promotion de la Femme

(AFPF)*+

B. P. 77

Dassa-Zoumé, Bénin

Tel.: (229) 53-01-15

Contact: Mme Agathe Okoundé, Présidente

Association pour la Promotion de la Femme en Milieu Rural

(APEFM)*+

B.P. 03-2010

Cotonou, Bénin

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Contact: Mme Innocentia Guédegbé

Association pour la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement

et le Développement (ASED)*+

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Bénin Nature+

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Contact: M. Patrice C. Gnacadja

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Organisation pour le Développement
Socio-culturel à la Base+
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Contact: M. Hippolyte Candjodjo , Responsable exécutif

Survie de la Mère et de l'Enfant*+
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Tel.: (229) 30-31-59 or 53-00-66
Fax: (229) 30-01-99
Contact: M. Bernard Gnantonnou

Burkina
Faso
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Association Vive le Paysan*+
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Fax: (226) 30-52-80
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Fax: (226) 97-08-02
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Fax: (226) 36-29-02
Contact: Mme Jacqueline Ki-Zerbo, Chargée de l'Information

Fédération de l'Union des Groupements NAAM *+
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Cameroon   Association Internationale pour la Promotion des Initiatives
Communautaires Africaines (APICA) *+
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Inadès-Formation*+

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